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A LAD'S LOVE

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I.

A LAD AND A LASS

FOR a long time everyone on the Island, from Mrs. Gibson to little Michael McCann, had known that one day Margaret Kergan and Brian Dean would wed. Indeed, Mrs. Gibson in the course of a one-sided conversation with Father Hennessey observed on an occasion, "Why don't they do it now, yer Riv'rance, an' have done with it; shure an' it's written fer them t' wed." Father Hennessey, clasping his hands over his stomach, is said to have replied, "Give them time, Missus Gibson; everything takes time."

"They've had all thayre lives," Mrs. Gibson chirped smartly. "What more do they want?"

And so they had. As children, toeing the hot dust of the Island road, Brian Dean had been Margy Kergan's ragged cavalier and knight. Now in the full flush of the splendid youth that was theirs they were sweethearts, their troth long since plighted solemnly at the edge of the wood on the West Shore, where the afternoon sun was wont to transform the Lake into a great, gleaming breadth of green satin shot with gold.

"They're a sight fer sore eyes," was Mrs. Gibson's habitual comment when it chanced that she saw them together from the uneven porch of the Island House, of which she had, these long years gone, been mistress.

And so they were—Brian in his youthful strength (he could send a boat eighty feet at a stroke) and Margy in the lithe beauty of her blossoming womanhood.

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Something of what they represented was apparent even to Mrs. Kergan, who always awaited them in the doorway of the little white house nestling among the trees at the edge of the clearing, and often did she talk with Father Hennessey of her Margy and her Brian.

This was to have been their summer. All winter Margy had planned for the wedding that was arranged for the autumn, and her heart had been light accordingly and her spirit gay—as gay as the flowers that grew at the wood edge.

Now it was as though her heart were lead in her bosom, for Brian was going away—to Chicago, City of Dreams, across the Lake. All the afternoon, in the cool of the woods, for May had come in hot, they had talked of the plans that he had made over night. Now that it was settled, for Margy had not raised her voice against his departure, though her heart cried out, there was nothing further to do.

The yellow sun was low in the west as they issued from the wood, and some of the violet cloud-tints were reflected on the sheen of the Lake.

There was a log there, at the edge of the clearing, and they sat down.

"You're going away," she half whispered as she gazed out across the water.

Brian looked down at the dust-filled wrinkles of his heavy boots.

"It won't be long," he said.

"I know it won't be, really," she replied, looking up at him and smiling, "but it will *seem* so long."

"Oh, pshaw! the summer will go before you can say 'Jack Robinson,' " he insisted.

She shook her head.

"It will for you," she said, "there in Chicago." She clasped her hands over her round knee and gave her head a little toss that shook off her sunbonnet, which thereafter she allowed to hang between her shoulders. "It'll be like another world, won't it?" she went on as though speaking to herself. "It'll be awful lonesome," she added, with a little catch in her voice.

"Oh, no, it won't, either, Margy. Haven't you got your mother and father and Father Hennessey and Mrs. Gibson and all the rest?"

"Brian," she asked, disregarding the speech and its assurance, "you're not tired of the Island, are you?"

"No," he answered gropingly, "I'm not tired of it. I'm happy here. You're here. I'm restless, that's all. Being away a little while will do me good. Then I'll come back."

She had not taken her eyes from his face, but now that he hesitated she let them fall and stared unseeing at the moss beside her, zealous to hide the tremor that she felt upon her lip.

"It ain't that I'm tired of the Island," he went on as though to himself. "I'm only uneasy. I guess you've taught me."

"I!" she cried.

He laughed. "Not the way you think," he explained. "Only you've shown me lots of things. You're happy here because all you want is here. I know how you feel. You like the birds and the squirrels and the woods. I like them all too, but I want more. It'll satisfy me to go away a while. I wouldn't be surprised any if I wanted to get back just as much as I want to go now. Father Hennessey says it'll do me good."

"So that's the surprise you said you had for me. And you're going Saturday."

Her voice trembled and she caught her breath.

"Don't feel bad, Margy," he said tenderly. "It won't be long; and then I'll come back, and we'll be married."

"If I'd only known it, it wouldn't be so hard," she mourned.

"I suppose I ought to have let you know," he replied, "but I thought it would only make it worse."

She smiled her forgiveness.

"For I haven't decided all at once," he went on defensively. "I've been thinking it over ever since last fall. But you hadn't ought to take it hard, Margy; it'll mean so much for us."

Her eyes, which she lifted to his, were moist, as though a filmy curtain had fallen over them, behind which they glowed.

He was encouraged by no remonstrance from her to a lighter tone.

"Just think how much it'll mean!" he exclaimed quite gayly. "I'll get good wages. Why, I'll get more than any fisherman on the Island can make. Martin told me that after I'd been there a month I'd be getting half again as much as they start me on. Besides,"—this eagerly,— "I'll be seeing the world. In the end it'll mean our own house here on the Island, for we sha'n't live with your folks or my brother. And then we'll live here always."

"And never go away—for good?" she speculated earnestly.

He shook his head. "Of course not," he assured. "That's what I've planned. I've talked it over with Father Hennessey. He said all the young fellows on the Island ought to get away a while—said it would do 'em good. He had a talk with Martin and told me what he said; said the Company wanted somebody from the Island and Martin didn't think of me till Father Hennessey mentioned how I'd like to go. He intended seeing Jerry McCann. And, Margy, I've never been anywhere off the Island in my life except to Mackinac once and Charleton."

"But Chicago's just like Charleton."

He laughed boisterously.

A little look of hurt came into her eyes.

"Ain't it?" she asked.

"Why, Chicago's got more'n a million people," he explained, sensible of his superior knowledge. "And there ain't nobody in Charleton except summer boarders and folks that have cottages."

"Seems to me," she replied with a little laugh, "there must be about a million there, from the number that come across in those little launches to picnic here in the woods and make us old Island people mad."

He shifted his position restlessly.

"Anyway, I'll be back the first of November," he said, "maybe in October. It won't be long. May's going fast now."

She sat up and leaned towards him, her chin in her hands.

"Brian," she began calmly, "when you're there in that big city, with so many people around you, and so much to see, and you've got so much to do, you won't forget"—her voice caught—"you won't forget—the Island, will you?"

Insensible as he was to the pain that lurked behind each word, still, something of what his answer meant to her, something of the fear she tried to smother in her heart, were given him to know.

"Why, I couldn't forget, Margy," he exclaimed, and reached out one hand and stroked her hair, "for I'll always want to come back where you are; and then one day I'll come, for I'll know you're waiting for me just as I'll be waiting to come to you, even,"—he smiled mistily,—"even if there's ten million folks around."

The great joy that was hers that instant shone in her eyes as she sprang to her feet.

"Kiss me, Brian," she cried, and held out her arms.

The sinking sun gilded the quivering edge of the Lake, and as they approached the little white house among the trees Margy's mother awaited her in the doorway. Her father had sailed across to Charleton after dinner and had not yet returned.

"I was lookin' fer ye, Margy," Mrs. Kergan called in her rich brogue. "Th' supper's on th' table."

"I'm coming," the girl replied, and ran to her, leaving Brian to follow at his slower pace.

As he came up Margaret said:

"He's going away, mother; he's going on Saturday."

Mrs. Kergan raised both hands.

"Arrah, my bye, an' arre ye, now!" she cried.

She insisted that he make known his purpose then and there.

"Well, Brian, bye, we'll miss ye," she exclaimed heartily when he had done. "But I'm afther thinkin' 'twill be Margy as will miss ye

most of all, she bein' th' one t' see ye oftenest." She cast a tender glance at her daughter and slipped a stout arm around her waist.

Brian laughed forcedly. "Yes, I suppose so," he said, "but it's only for the summer. Margy understands," he added quickly.

"An' what does yer brother, Terrance, say?" Mrs. Kergan asked.

"He's glad."

"Arrah, t' be sure," she nodded. "'Tis well for th' byes, an' th' gurrils too, f'r th' matter o' that, t' see suthin' o' th' worrld afure a-sit-tilin' down. Luk at Margy, here,"—and she gave the girl a little hug,—“niver wanst in her life has she been farther away from this ould Island than Charleton. Have ye?”

Margaret shook her head.

"But thin," her mother went on volubly, casting a heavy wink at Brian, "as near as I'm a-secin' she'll be a-goin' off wan iv these days."

"Mother!" the girl cried, a blush mounting her cheek. Brian laughed.

"I wouldn't wonder," he said.

"Oh! ho!" laughed Mrs. Kergan boisterously. "So you think so yoursilf, do ye? Well, thin, let's have supper. I told yer father it's a cowl'd one he'd be 'atin' if he wasn't here."

Yet even as she spoke a long, faint halloo floated across the water to where they stood and all three turned. A cat-boat was making for the shaky dock that ran some fifty feet into the Lake.

"An' thayre he comes now; he must 'a' heard me!" Mrs. Kergan cried. She ran lumberingly down to the beach and out upon the narrow dock. She skilfully caught the line her husband cast and made fast the boat as the sail with an ineffectual flap fell to the boom.

"Good-night."

Margaret felt Brian's hand on hers. They stood in the shadow of the narrow porch. He drew her to him and kissed her.

"Good-night," she whispered.

They stood thus an instant, close, bathed in the golden glow of sunset.

"You'll come back, Brian?" she said.

"I promise."

He left her then, and from the porch she followed with her eyes his tall, straight figure until it was lost in the black wood, from which the light had long since fled.

And that night, in her loneliness, her mother came to her and patted her cheek.

"Thayre, thayre, darlin'," she comforted, "he'll be a-comin' back."

"I know, mother," was the dreary answer, "but it will be so long."

II.

ON A MORNING IN MAY

A FOG hung over the Lake. Through the gray film of gossamer the sun of early summer glowed like a huge red wafer suspended from the sky. Near things were draped with the dripping lace and distant objects were ghost-gray. The docks on the East Shore were shrouded, and the long, low packing-house beyond loomed cold, distorted, endless.

At the end of the Company's wharf, rising and settling rhythmically, was tied the trim steam fishing lugger Jane, in the day before from Chicago and due to return straightway. A spiral of pale smoke rose from the stack a scant three feet, where, encountering a heavier stratum of air, it hung, a splotch of thin smudge against the fog.

Captain Spriggs, born within sight and sound of salt water, but forced by a cavorting fate to spend his days sailing the Lakes, much to his often-voiced disgust, sat over his beans and pork and perch and coffee, in the Widow Gibson's waxen Island House kitchen, grumbling beneath his breath and scowling beneath his bushy iron-gray eyebrows. Apart from his ever-cherished disgust that he should be a "tea-cup sailor," as it was his wont to characterize those who go down to the Lake in ships, Captain Spriggs had other reasons for testiness this morning that even the delectable viands set before him by the Widow failed to overshadow. There was the fog. Captain Spriggs had planned to get away at sun-up. Awakening at the usual hour, he had failed to locate the sun. Now at seven-thirty its value to him was still obscured by the curtain of mist behind which it glowed. And he was going to have a passenger going over. Captain Spriggs detested passengers, both in the abstract and concrete, with all the fervor possible to a Lake merchant-mariner.

"Damn it!" he growled, "th' Jane wa'n't made fer passengers t' be lollin' 'roun' on, a-heavin' up their insides 'cause she smells a mite fishy. They ain't got no place on her, an' when I git back I'll tell 'em so!" And as he spoke he removed with his stubby forefinger the entire spine of a fragrant, breaded perch.

"Lucky 'tain't a woman," observed Jamison, his mate, who sat opposite, as across his bristly lips he drew the cuff of his heavy jacket.

"Womin be blamed!" growled Captain Spriggs. "No, sir! Next time they give me a woman t' lug over here 'n' back I resigns—even if 'tis th' President's daughter."

Jamison smiled at recollection of the occasion to which Captain Spriggs referred. Flossie Hershey had for one day and a night owned the steamer Jane from keel to stack.

From behind the stove came Mrs. Gibson's shrill cackle.

"Don't ye be slanderin' that little gurrl now, Cap'n, fer a smarter one niver lived less'n it be Margy Kergan."

"Ugh," grunted the worthy master of the Jane.

"Do ye ivir see her?" asked Mrs. Gibson.

"She's been picked, I'm told," replied Captain Spriggs.

"Been what?" shouted Mrs. Gibson, and Jamison, even, looked up from his beans.

"She's goin' t' be married—so Macey was sayin'—t' th' feller that was here with her that time."

"Yeh don't tell me!" observed Mrs. Gibson.

"Both wearin' a ring jes' alike, Macey was sayin'—an engagement ring."

"Aye, gar, I remember!" exclaimed Mrs. Gibson, coming from behind the stove; "thin they were ingaged whin they was here last summer. She showed me her ring kinder proud loike, and he had one, th' same—a red one, all in gold."

Captain Spriggs nodded.

"An' will they be over this summer?" the mistress of the Island House inquired.

"He may—Macey was sayin'—in July mebbe," the Captain replied.

"Have you seen young Dean?" asked Jamison indifferently.

"Naw!" Crunch.

"Martin was sayin' we'd have t' wait till he shows up." It was as though Jamison spoke thus insinuatingly merely for the effect his suggestion would produce upon his irascible Captain. The effect was immediate.

Captain Spriggs slammed his knife on the table.

"Wait be——"

His sudden swallowing of the oath that rose contemptuously to his lips was due to the quick return to the kitchen of its alert and chastening manager, who for a moment had gone out upon the porch to note the condition of the fog.

"Shure," she exclaimed, "an' betwane th' fog an' th' trouble iv me own bad asthma I mos' fergot ye, Cap'n."

She snatched a yellow bowl that stood upon the table and stirred the golden contents vigorously.

"Howld yer lines," she cried, and with a marvellous dexterity of wrist flipped great spoonfuls of the potion on the smoking griddle.

"What's them?" inquired Captain Spriggs, rising in his chair and peering over the head of the Mate.

"Ye have two guesses," replied the Widow Gibson mockingly.

"Buckwheat!" said the Mate.

"Buckwheat nawthin'!" exclaimed the mistress of the Island House.

"'Tis too late in th' sayson fer th' loikes iv thim."

"Corn!" ventured Captain Spriggs.

Mrs. Gibson shrieked. "Arrah, ye've guessed it," and as the Captain

settled back into his chair, a smile of ineffable pleasure giving way to his habitual scowl, Mrs. Gibson, with another exhibition of digital dexterity, flipped the browning cakes upon the griddle. Presently she held out to him a heaping plate from which he removed four of the smoking discs, buttering them straightway and flooding them with syrup from the blue-ware pitcher. Captain Spriggs finished his meal in silence, and when he had done he pulled a long breath.

"Ah, 'twas a good breakfast!" he exclaimed. Seizing his great sou'wester, he stamped out of the kitchen with the noise that always marked his movements, and at the door plumped square into the arms of the sleek, round Father of the Island Parish.

"Well, well, well, Captain Spriggs," he gurgled. "An' how arre ye an' how's th' Jane? A bad day; a day t' stay ashore, Cap'n. An' so yer takin' wan of our byes back t' Chicago with ye! Well, no matter; we've enough an' to spare. But ye have th' best in Brian Dean; ye have the best."

During this characteristic greeting he had continued to shake the fretting Captain's claw-like hand in his own, so smooth and fat.

"Do ye know kin he work?" Spriggs asked tersely, at last withdrawing his hand from the Father's grasp.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Priest, giving the Captain a playful thrust in his lean ribs with a pudgy forefinger. "Give him a chance. He'll soon show ye."

The old Lake mariner cocked an experienced eye at the crimson sun and the wrinkles deepened around his nose.

"It won't take long t' tell," he observed dryly, "fer if that fog don't lift there'll be whoopin' hell t' pay, fer I'm a-goin'—fog er no fog."

Suddenly realizing his profanity in the presence of the cloth, he plunged down the steps and was gone. As for Father Hennessey, he laughed; he held both his sides in the good old monkish way and laughed loud and long. But entering the kitchen and encountering Mrs. Gibson's amazed face he assumed a look of shocked sobriety and told her of his collision with the Captain, whereat she laughed with him as she poured a cup of coffee for him. Brian came before he had finished with it. Father Hennessey had quite forgotten that it was the day set for his departure for Chicago, and he put his cup on the chair-arm and at once began a dissertation on the wickedness of the great city across the Lake that would have amused a resident of that city far more than it did Brian.

Brian laughingly assured the Priest that his advice would not be forgotten, and they went down to the dock together.

Captain Spriggs was aboard the Jane, but, perceiving them, came to the rail and called down a shrill halloo to the Priest.

"Fog er no fog, we're a-goin'," he piped.

A cry sounded behind them just then, and both Father Hennessey and Brian turned. At the top of the steep bank just beyond the fishshed, her figure sharply outlined against the gray sky, stood Margy. She came quickly down the uneven slope, the swing of her lissome body suggesting the movements of some splendid animal. She was bare-headed, and the red sun shining through the thinning mist seemed to convert her reddish hair to glistening gold. Brian set his fat oil-cloth valise on the dock and went to meet her.

"Well, well, well; ain't you ever goin' t' come aboard?"

Captain Spriggs's rasping voice cut the stillness again.

"Good-by, Margy," Brian said. Their hands clasped, and for a little instant their eyes met frankly, confidently. "In October—maybe sooner," he promised.

Lines were cast off at once, and the same instant, as though by magic, the fog lifted, revealing the sun, yellow now above the Lake.

In the stern of the little steamer, leaning upon the low rail, stood Brian, his shiny valise on the deck beside him, gazing back at the undulating line of the Island, hung from nothing between two blue skies. For a long time the figures on the dock remained distinct, but finally, as he watched, they became one with the wood beyond.

III.

DEAD DAYS

"COME, Margy," the Priest said, and laid a gentle hand on the girl's shoulder.

She turned and stared at him an instant perplexedly, then uttered a little, nervous laugh.

"I guess I was dreaming," she said.

Father Hennessey smiled.

"Aye, I'll wager," he exclaimed boisterously.

She walked beside him, along the unstable dock, languidly, her eyes bent upon the uneven timbers at her feet. As they stepped into the road at the end Mrs. Gibson appeared on the back porch of the Island House, wiping her hands on her blue-checked apron.

She caught sight of the figures in the road and stood, squinting.

"Well, th' saints bless me if it ain't Margy Kergan!" she exclaimed; then, lifting her voice to a piping staccato, she called:

"Mar-gee! Margy Kergan! Come 'long over here if His Riv-rance'll let ye!"

The girl looked up, and a light of pleasure flared an instant in her eyes.

"I'm comin'!" she called back, and ran down the road. The Priest, less alert upon his feet, followed with a more becoming dignity.

As she came up to the porch Mrs. Gibson, as was her custom, burst into a torrent of welcome.

"Come, yer Riv'rance," she called over her shoulder, as she drew the girl within the kitchen, "shure it's airly yet; th' boiler's not off th' stove an' thayre's a hot cup o' coffee waitin'."

"Ah, oh," Father Hennessey gurgled, and rubbed his fat hands vigorously.

"Thayre, Margy, gurrl," the Widow exclaimed as she set a cup of steaming coffee on a corner of the clean, white table, "drink it; 'twill do ye good."

Father Hennessey settled himself comfortably into the armchair at the window and Mrs. Gibson served him with a cup, then passed a yellow bowl of round, fat doughnuts.

Margaret blew ripples across the surface of the pungent morning drink, dearer to the Island people than their food, but Father Hennessey, eager to feel the oily liquid in his throat, poured the contents of his cup into the saucer and drank it thus, balancing the cup on the arm of the chair.

Mrs. Gibson, her hands on her hips, stood in the middle of the floor and watched her guests, her eyes twinkling with delight at the obvious pleasure of the Priest, who smacked his lips resoundingly upon each mouthful of his doughnut.

"Margy, how's th' hens?" she asked suddenly. "Shure an' thayre's not an egg in th' house!"

Margaret smiled over the rim of her cup. "Maybe I could bring down a dozen," she chanced.

Presently she pushed back her chair.

"I must go," she said, "there's lots to do at home."

Mrs. Gibson turned from the sink and wiped her hands on her blue-checked apron.

"Must ye, darlin'?" she said. "Thayre! And she planted a loud kiss upon the girl's smooth cheek. "Now, don't forgit th' eggs," she cautioned.

Then, shifting her eyes to the window, her mouth opened and she squinted, pointing.

"What is it?" Margaret whispered, and turned.

There in the deep armchair, the sunlight playing on his frosted head, his saucer on the window-sill, the cup still clutched in one fat hand, his mouth open, and an expression of supreme contentment on his smooth, round face, sat the Priest—asleep.

"S-s-s-sh!" Mrs. Gibson hissed, lifting a bony finger to her lips, and Margaret tiptoed to the door.

A deep, vibrating snore shattered the silence of the kitchen, and Mrs. Gibson, unable longer to hold back her laughter, cackled shrilly.

There was an awakening forthwith in the chair by the window. The cup slipped from the Father's nerveless fingers and crashed upon the floor. He sat up, blinking. He stared inquiringly from one to the other of the women.

"What was that?" he muttered.

He looked down, where between his feet lay the fragments of the cup. The meaning of the moment leaped into his mind.

Rising hastily, he advanced upon the shaking Widow, red of face, quivering with emotion.

"I—oh—ah——" he began.

Margaret, with a peal of laughter, rushed from the kitchen then, and left the Widow and the Father to their own devices.

The wood called to her, and she obeyed the summons and chose the path that wound among the trees.

A way along there lay a long, thick log, opposite a naked, blasted trunk, riven by an ancient storm. She seated herself upon the log and for a space stared blankly at the woodland skeleton across. In a way the ruin of the tree was strangely like the past year, she told herself. She had been so happy. And now in the strength of the new-born love that was hers she too had been stripped, stricken. Brian had gone. The year had lost its life, for in his going she felt that her life as well had gone; that a terrible suspense would hold her until his return.

With a plaintive cry, like that of an animal wounded, she sprang from the log and ran along the path, and as she ran the pain subsided somehow in her heart, and when she reached the open and saw her father's house among the trees the anguish she had suffered fled entirely and she became herself again.

An interest in the simple drudgery of the Island home awakened in her, and she rejoiced in the tasks she knew awaited her quick hands. Her mother, who had glimpsed her from the window, flung back the door at her approach and smiled across the dooryard at her.

"Yer jus' in time, darlin'," she called. "Yer father's in th' shed, lookin' over th' nets."

"And I can mend them!" Margaret cried eagerly.

"Ay, that's what he's expectin'," her mother replied, and gave her daughter's firm, smooth arm a gentle pinch.

Kergan issued from the shed just then, bent beneath the load of net upon his back.

Margaret ran to him, calling, "Here, father, let me carry some." And she upset the load with much laughter, in which the old man joined. Gathering up a mass in her arms, she staggered across the clearing and flung it upon the grass, where it lay like a heap of coarse lace beneath the wobbling reel.

Her father joined her with another roll, and between them they

stretched and smoothed the long, broad net and fastened one end evenly to the windlass of the high, crude reel. Margaret guided the fabric as her father turned the creaking crank with short, uneven, jerky motions. When both the nets were wound, and the reel looked like a monster spool of dirty linen thread, the girl ran into the house, returning at once with a shuttle and a ball of twine.

She sank upon the turf below the reel, and seizing the corners of the net at either side drew it off into her lap swiftly, scanning its width from right to left for rents. She loaded the shuttle from the ball, over and under, over and under, with a dexterity born of much practice. Whenever her bright eyes fell upon a break she uttered a little cry of delight and fell to work swiftly, confident in her talent for the work, until, with three, six, nine, thrusts of the twinkling shuttle through the meshes at the ragged edge, and the tying of a knot, the rent completely disappeared. Her father stood over her, looking down with lighted eyes, marvelling at the swiftness of her fingers. When finally he slouched away she heard him mutter,—

“I niver see th’ like.”

“I’ll mend for the whole Island if you’ll bring the nets!” she called to him. He shook his finger at her playfully as he vanished within the shed.

Until noon she sat at her task, and in the afternoon, when the sun was high and glared blindingly on the gray-green water, she sailed with him to the long North Point, where Andy McCann abided, to whom he had promised to bring a net.

So passed the first day of her loneliness as many another day would pass.

Only now and then was the dull monotony broken, as when a storm tossed the Lake and beat the waters into foam and the wind shrieked in the open and moaned among the tree-tops; or the Father came to share the evening meal with the dwellers in the little house set back from the beach among the trees. Whenever he came thus among them the spirit of the girl revived. It was as though in the radiance of his sunny nature she partook of its warmth and light. He knew her moods and sought to cheer her in the loneliness he realized she had never felt till now.

One soft night in mid-June, a month after Brian’s leaving, she sat between her mother and the Priest on the bench that Kergan had built at the end of the tottering dock. Overhead a myriad stars glittered cold and calm. Across the Lake a cool breeze swept, and the girl held back her head that it might play upon her neck.

“Well, Margy,” the Priest observed, leaning towards her, “I suppose th’ banns’ll be read th’ first Sunday he’s back?”

She did not answer, but continued to gaze, smiling, at the stars. He nudged Mrs. Kergan playfully.

"I'm thinkin' she's wishin' they was t' be read t'-morrer," Mrs. Kergan suggested dryly.

"Mother! I'm not either!" Margaret exclaimed reprovingly, and cast down her eyes. And there was much laughter between her mother and the Priest at her expense.

Long into the night thereafter, as the moonlight, streaming in at the open window of her room, fell full, pure white, and chastely cold upon the picture of the Holy Mother that hung above her bed, she lay awake, living over again in memory their days together. She heard, faint and melancholy, in the distance the cry of the whippoorwill; and close at hand, as though in answer, the maniacal laugh of the loon. With these voices of the woodland night sounding in her ears she fell asleep to dream of his return.

IV.

THE PATH IN THE WOOD

SPRING vanished magically and summer burst upon the Island in full glory. To Margy, looking back, it had been a long, long time. The days had dragged on with leaden feet, and in June, five weeks after Brian's going away, his absence seemed to her to have been of years. She caught herself again and again seeking to establish in her mind the many little particulars of his person that, altogether, she had never sought to remember. How many buttons were there on the coat he wore the day she bade him good-by at the boat? Try as she might, she could not recall. Had he worn then a white collar or his warm blue flannel shirt open at the throat, disclosing the fulness and strength of his neck. Things about him that once had been distinct were now shadowy, like the characteristics of dream people that we reach out to feel, as it were, but that elude us so aggravatingly.

The lonesomeness that at first had weighted her heart and brought forth the tears when she lay at night, living over again the old days with him, now all was gone. In its place was a resignation, such as death brings after the first pangs have subsided. Yet relief she would have welcomed with open arms, and clasped it to her child breast gladly. The blood bounded through her body as vigorously, the blush came and went upon her cheek as delicate in its flower tints, and life was as dear to her, and the life about her as glorious, now, as ever.

So June passed as May had passed and as July in turn would pass, and she continued to live gloriously, unconsciously, so that now and again she marvelled at the pain of her parting with Brian on a day in spring. What she hungered for was not the privilege of continuing to love him, for that was surely hers, but presence, the ecstasy of being held close in strong arms and herself loved, for she was the embodiment

of passion, eager, pulsating, all-absorbing passion. She was glad to be alone among the trees and free to luxuriate in rich dreams. She was the spirit of love abroad in the woods.

On the road, this silent July morning, the sun beat relentlessly. Even to the tough, brown feet of the children the dust was hot, and when a sudden waft of air caught it up and sent it whirling down the road it was blinding to those of their elders who sought the Company's wharf to gossip.

Margy had followed the path through the wood, and, issuing into the hot, dry road at the Eastern Shore, had shielded her eyes with her curved palm and stood there, half in the shade, gazing across the brilliant Lake. She decided it was too hot to follow the road around the Southern Point, and determined to return the way she had come. On her arm hung a little basket in which she was bringing eggs to Mrs. Gibson. She ran across the unsheltered road the more quickly to escape the heat that quivered above it, and brought up at the door of the Island House panting. She opened her frock at the throat, and as the mistress of the tavern removed the eggs she plied violently a palm-leaf fan.

"An' arre ye most melted?" Mrs. Gibson inquired, counting the eggs by threes as she placed them gently in the shining pan.

Margaret smiled by way of answer and held back her head and drew out the neck of her frock that the breeze she wrought might kiss her breast. Presently she put down the fan and rolled her thin sleeves to her rounded elbows.

"I guess it's cooler on our side," she said, as she took the basket from the table.

"An' won't ye have a doughnut, Margy?" Mrs. Gibson straightway went to the crock on the shelf and took out two, which she gave the girl.

"You'd better have the Island House moved to the West Shore," Margaret advised, then sunk her firm white teeth into the thick brown cake.

"Lordy, I'd like t'," Mrs. Gibson exclaimed. She followed the girl to the porch and called after her:

"Take th' path, Margy; ye'll git a stroke if ye don't."

Margaret waved the hand which held the second doughnut by way of reply and ran across the road.

Once within the shade of the cool, moist wood, she drew a deep breath and munched the cake satisfiedly. Following the path among the trees she hummed a quaint Irish air that Brian's mother had taught him as a little boy and that he had always remembered, with the aid of his guitar, to teach it, in turn, to Margaret. On the trunk of a tree a way ahead a brilliant woodpecker clung perpendicularly, drilling for

grubs. At her approach the bird did not cease its spasmodic tattoo. She stood still and watched the hammering red head of the brilliant thing until, satisfied with its prospecting in the bark, it ascended the trunk, spirally, to disappear as though by magic behind the lowest branch. Swinging her basket by one hand, Margaret continued along the path.

As she walked she kept her eyes upon the edge, and presently she espied a violet, one purple petal peeping over the curled rim of an old brown leaf. As she tore the long, pale-green stem from the moist earth she said:

"There, there, I sha'n't hurt you," as though the flower were a sensitive thing.

She brushed the violet across her lips. There was a sudden commotion in the bushes ahead. She stood still, then stepped back. Her teeth came together on the stem of the flower and it dangled over her lip to her chin. She held her breath; but even before she could determine to turn, or to advance and confront this unseen intruder upon her woodland solitude, the bushes parted, and a young man, carrying a basket and a jointed fishing-rod, stepped into the path.

"Oh!"

She raised one hand to her cheek.

He had not seen her, but at her very human exclamation he turned suddenly, his own face a little pale, and confronted her. The sudden light of fright fled from his eyes and a look of wonder took its place. Then he smiled.

"My, you skairt me!" she murmured, and let her hand fall.

He strode towards her then, boldly, his cap in his hand.

"I'm very sorry," he said. "Really, I didn't mean to; and I hope you'll forgive me."

He seemed to await her reply.

"Oh, you didn't very much," she said after an instant, "only I didn't expect it was anybody. I thought may be it was a pig or a loose calf or——"

His smile had broadened. Now he laughed outright.

"I didn't mean *that*," she muttered, letting her eyes fall, having caught something of the meaning of his laugh.

"There, now," he reassured her, "I know it. I know I'm not a pig and—and I hope I'm not a loose calf."

She glanced up pleadingly, caught his eyes, and then laughed with him.

He stood squarely in front of her, as though he would block the way. What his thoughts were that instant of their meeting in the silence of the deep wood he was wont often, long after, to confess to himself.

"Coming—coming so suddenly upon you," he said, "has almost made me forget why I was floundering around in there." He indicated the bushes through which he had plunged into the path.

She looked inquiringly at him.

"I was trying to find the way," he went on quite naturally. "I'd been up at the North Point, fishing, but it was too hot. Didn't get a bite even. The road was so dusty I asked the old man there if I couldn't come down through the woods and he told me how to find the path. I guess I didn't follow directions quite. But this is it, isn't it?" he asked; "this will take me to the Island House, won't it?"

"Yes," she answered, "right along back there; you can't lose it, but it winds a lot." She turned and pointed, holding her arm straight from her shoulder, her head tilted never so slightly. He did not follow the direction that she indicated, but allowed his eyes to linger upon her. He perceived the rounded chin; was sensible to the low, broad forehead, from which her reddish hair was negligently brushed. He saw too the little ringlets, low against her smooth, round neck. By her attitude all the lines of her rich young figure were revealed beneath the clinging calico of her frock.

"It's not far from here," she assured, "and it brings you right out at the Island House."

"Yes, yes," he said, and there was a note of nervousness in the tone employed. She lowered her arm and turned to him again. He drew to one side of the path.

"I'm ever so much obliged," he said. "I'd have floundered around here all day if it hadn't been for you, I guess," he added.

She smiled.

He put on his cap, and as he passed her smiled, and she cast down her eyes again. She walked on slowly five yards and turned. He too had stopped and was looking back. She started forward quickly, but not before she perceived the gesture that he made as their eyes met—the gesture of throwing a kiss. The rest of the way she walked more swiftly, her eyes upon the path, nor did she hear the call of the birds about her, and shortly perceived, with surprise, that she had reached the clearing.

The meeting in the wood had come about so suddenly, had been so brief, that she smilingly wondered if it had really happened at all. Yet the picture of the young man was very clear in her mind, for she had unconsciously received an impression that clung to her, owing to its novelty. He was handsome. His hands were white and he wore a ring that she had particularly noted because as he came towards her, holding his cap, a vagrant ray of light had struck it and glinted to her eyes—a ring holding a blood-red stone. His clothes were different from any she had ever seen, and fitted him wonderfully well. The

basket dependent from his shoulder by the strap gave him a jaunty air. Altogether— Then she remembered the gesture he had made and a flow of color came into her cheeks. She drew in her lower lip. Lifting her eyes, she beheld her mother's figure in the doorway of the house.

"Mrs. Gibson gave me a doughnut—two of 'em," she called. "I don't want any dinner."

V.

THE CURRENT

ON Thursday Margaret set out again for the Island House with eggs for Mrs. Gibson. As she approached the point in the path where she had met the strange young man two days before she was quite prepared for a repetition of the incident, and after she had passed and was well into the wood she experienced a twinge of disappointment that he had not appeared. She would ask Mrs. Gibson to tell her the stranger's name. He had sought direction to the Island House, so, of course, he was staying there. She wondered if he could, by chance, be a cottager at Charleton. Mrs. Gibson could tell her all about him, she assured herself. But when the mistress of the Island House had counted the eggs and put them away and was quite ready to talk Margaret hesitated. Her courage failed her. Then, when with a little cry the woman ran to the oven where a forgotten pie was baking, Margaret, giving way to her irresolution, turned and left the kitchen. Mrs. Gibson surely would have asked her questions, she told herself. And it was her own little secret, the meeting with the strange young man. Besides, Mrs. Gibson would perhaps have scolded her. Of course, there would be no reason for her so doing, but Mrs. Gibson dearly loved to scold, and Margaret as dearly loved not to be scolded. The girl considered thus her safe position as she lingered an instant at the porch to caress the tall hollyhocks that grew in such profusion there. Perhaps he had already gone, she thought, as she crossed the road and came upon the path. Indeed, she was quite certain he had gone. Ordinarily strangers found little to amuse them on the Island, and he had been alone. So she made at once to put all memory of him from her mind. Yet she could not. There was the indistinct but satisfactory picture he had made, standing before her in the path, his cap in his hand, smiling at her. How well his clothes had fitted, she mused. They looked as though they might have been made just for him.

She emitted a little sigh and flung her arms above her head, and clasped her hands at her neck behind, beneath the low-hanging coil of reddish hair. She fell to humming the air that she had learned from Brian.

Suddenly she heard the patter of quick, light footfalls behind her, and before she could turn a call.

"I say, don't be in a hurry, my woodland fairy!"

Her heart leaped in her breast and she unclasped her hands and, turning, her eyes met his, which now were smiling as frankly as they were before. A sense of gladness crept over her and she cried quite gayly,—

"Have you lost your way again?" and as she spoke she too smiled.

"No," he answered, coming up to where she stood, "but I thought I had lost you. There," he added quickly, as she lowered her eyes, "I didn't mean quite that. But I saw you leave the Inn. I was down on the beach at the other side of the wharf; you couldn't see me. The fishing is no good, so I got out my camera this morning. I thought I might get a few pictures. I want one of you. This path is so crooked. That's what I meant."

She had made no attempt to follow him. Indeed, she might have encountered difficulty had she so attempted. But he spoke so frankly, so lightly, that she caught herself smiling at him again.

"I've been in the path all the time," she said naively.

She started on, and it seemed to her then quite right that he should fall into step beside her.

"Do you mind my walking with you till we come to a good place?" he asked.

She gave him a glance of unconscious coquetry from the side of her eye.

"The path's free," she said.

"I know," he replied, "but—but maybe you're not."

She turned her head so that her eyes met his squarely.

"I like to have you."

It was almost as though she had struck him, and, recovering, he marvelled at her candor and felt a boyish pulse of satisfaction. It was as though she had found the opening in his armor of deportment and had touched him there. His vanity craved further confidence from this ingenuous creature who spoke her mind so freely. And as he gazed deep into her wide, innocent eyes, the instant she turned to him, he seemed to feel a little tugging at his heartstrings. It was this that caused him to smile again a moment later.

"Say," he exclaimed, "we're going to be good friends, aren't we?"

"Uh, huh," she replied with a little nod.

"I was beginning to wish I had not come to the Island at all," he rambled on, "until I met you. I've been hoping to see you again ever since. I'll tell you what let's do!" he exclaimed suddenly,—“let's go where we first met and I'll take your picture.”

"Oh, will you?" she cried, and made a little gesture of delight.

Then the smile fled suddenly and a downcast look came into her eyes. "No, I don't want you to," she added, "not in this dress. I don't want you to."

She realized with actual pain the shabbiness of her poor calico frock. Yet never before had she been thus sensible to her appearance. It was as though she would shrink away and be unseen. Her eyes, which she had turned to him as she spoke, were appealing, infinitely pathetic.

Perhaps it was due to his perception of her distress that he exclaimed, "Nonsense! Why, it's just the dress. It's the one you wore day before yesterday," he added. "You see I remember. I remember these little tucks, or whatever they are, at the shoulders."

"Those aren't tucks," she cried, and all her gayety came back, and she laughed frankly at his mistake.

He laughed too then, saying: "Oh, I don't know, anyway. Maybe they aren't. It doesn't make any difference, they are pretty."

He saw that she was pleased and continued in the same way until they were deep in the wood.

"I want to take your picture where I first met you," he said, "then, whenever I see it, it will recall you as you were then, a woodland fairy."

"You frightened me so I don't remember just where it was," she said; but there was laughter in her eyes as she spoke.

"Oh, but I do," he cried. "There was a log beside the path, and right across from it was a tree that had been split down the middle——"

"Lightning," she interpolated.

"I couldn't miss the place," he added. "You shall sit on the log, with your hands clasped behind your head, and I'll call the picture 'A Woodland Fay,' for you're like one; your eyes are."

"What are they?" she asked wonderingly.

"Your eyes?"

"No, the other."

"Oh, fay; why a fay is a fairy, only it's more poetic."

"Can you make rhymes?" she asked with enthusiasm.

"No, not very good ones," he replied. "I wish I could. I'd write a beautiful poem about your eyes and your hair. But as it is I can only try to photograph you."

They walked on in silence a little way until, meeting a bend in the path, "There's the place!" Margy cried suddenly.

"I thought you didn't know?" he answered, laughing.

She turned away, and the rich color that once before he had seen upon her cheek mounted it again. He placed his hand on her shoulder. It was only for an instant, but he felt the firm flesh beneath the thin garment she wore, and the contact thrilled him.

"I'm sorry," he began, "but you know you said——"

"I lied," she half whispered, and turned her eyes to his.

For an instant he hesitated, then exclaimed calmly: "There; sit down."

He posed her on the log quite as an artist might his model, then, stepping back a pace and cocking his head, noted her posture.

"There, hold just that way," he cried, and ran a little way back up the path.

"Look up at that branch over there," he called. He examined the finder of his camera.

"Just that way; only a second."

She held her breath. The shutter clicked.

"There; I've got you!" he cried.

He ran to where she sat and held out both his hands. She took them and he assisted her to rise. As they walked on, one of her hands was still clasped in one of his. At first she made to draw it away, but his clasp had tightened, so she allowed it to remain there.

Ahead they saw the sun, through the trees, brilliant on the Lake.

"I must hurry now," she said.

"Say," he exclaimed so suddenly that she turned to him with a little light of fright in her eyes; "it's odd, but I don't even know your name. Won't you tell me what it is?"

"It's Margaret," she replied. "But they've always called me Margy—Margy Kergan. I live through there. Do you see the house, at the edge of the clearing?"

Such simplicity he had never before encountered. What a story it would be to tell back home. Gad! he thought, had ever a fellow before been granted a vacation that promised to be so interesting. He regretted momentarily that in a few days the wide Lake would separate him from this child of the wood. How beautiful she was! The sheen of gold was in her hair, and the stencil of leaf-shadows only served to heighten the rare beauty of her face. His hand found hers again, nor did she attempt to withdraw it now, but only smiled. He drew her to him quickly and, holding her close, kissed her many times. Nor did she struggle in his arms; yet, as each to the other their hearts spoke that instant, there was a sudden pain in his that was gone even as it came, almost. He released her, and she stood before him, her eyes on the ground.

"Why did you do it?" There was no anger in her voice, but rather a tremulous quality that might have been of sadness. It aggravated him, and he answered a little impatiently:

"Oh, what's the difference, dear? There; don't feel bad. I love you, Margy. I love you."

She lifted her eyes.

"I'll meet you here this afternoon," he said. "Will you come?"

About two o'clock, and—and you can tell me all about the Island, and your life here. Will you?"

Long afterwards, recalling the instant, he was wont to laugh, for he remembered how breathlessly he had hung upon her answer, as though it meant very much to him.

"I'll see," she said.

He seized one of her hands.

"Tell me you will," he pleaded. "Will you?"

She nodded, and, turning, ran along the path. He watched her as she sped across the clearing.

"Gad!" he muttered when he could no longer see her.

For an age it seemed to him he paced the path that afternoon, but at last she came. A little cry of delight escaped him when he beheld her. He had not heard a sound, yet there she stood. He experienced a sensation of awe. The feeling left him as she came on, her face glad.

"I knew you'd come," he said.

She smiled.

"I wanted to come."

About them were many birds that sang for them. In the trees the squirrels chattered, and overhead a light wind rustled the leafage.

He talked to her of many things, and she listened eagerly. Every word, every tender tone he voiced bore them nearer and nearer the precipice. Yet neither fought the trend. He kissed her again and again, and now she returned his kisses. The sweetness of the woodland and her nearness combined to intoxicate him. He loved her; he was confident. There was no illusion now. And she was his, all his, for he had called to her, and had she not come? In the heart of the wood that afternoon each dreamed that life at last had dawned and neither feared the waking.

VI.

THE GATE OF DEATH

HALF the morning it had rained, a disagreeable drizzle, and now, with the sun a degree past meridian and blazing relentlessly, the humidity was great. The earth seemed to sweat and the heat, quivering, one could almost feel with one's fingers. To the young man in the path at the edge of the clearing, however, the air was not so hot, even, as to the men on the East Shore, and they were used to the summer temperature of the Island. He wiped his forehead with a white handkerchief the corner of which had shown above the rim of his breast-pocket, where also was his watch attached to a chain that lost itself in the top button-hole of his Norfolk jacket. Seating himself on a fallen tree, at its gaunt, stark roots, he removed his hat and set it beside him.

After a few minutes he took out his watch and regarded the dial

frowningly. A laugh, high, musical, caused him to turn quickly with a little start of surprise. At the end of the path stood Margy, smiling and watching him. His face lighted and he stood up. She came running to him, her hands held out. He seized her as she reached him and, holding her close, kissed her.

"How long were you here," he asked, putting her from him, but still holding her by the shoulders, "you bad girl?"

"Oh, a long, long time," she replied quite gayly. "Were you watching the ants?"

"Yes," he said, and slipped his arm around her.

"I've watched them ever so many times," she said, as they walked on down the path,—“ever so many times. They're just like people, aren't they!” she exclaimed. “I've seen them do the funniest things. I wonder if they talk. Do you suppose they do? I *know* they think.”

"I guess so," he said.

"My! Ain't it hot!" she exclaimed suddenly. She slipped from within his arm, and taking off her sunbonnet fanned herself vigorously, holding her head back that the little breeze she wrought might cool her throat.

"Lord! you're pretty!" he exclaimed impetuously.

She cast him a little, pleased look.

"I ain't, either," she replied.

Something tightened upon his heart, it was as though a strong hand clutched it, and he suffered a moment's pang. Somehow she seemed to him more simple, that instant, than she had before. Till now—this he confessed to himself—he had regarded her more as a pretender, forming his judgment upon the profit of his own experience, while conditioning his estimate with the frank thought that he had never known—large as was his experience of them—another girl like her. Now, however, as they walked on, and he only half listened to her prattle, he fell into the mood of analysis which was his not infrequently, and his estimate suffered a change which carried with it a certain sense of shame—a qualm new and strange to him. He was aggravated and chafed. The mood left him as suddenly as it had come, and he fell quite easily again into the spirit of her talk.

"Let's sit down here," he said as they came to a little rise of ground at one side of the path where the moss was thick and dry. He was silent mostly while she prattled on. He asked her, now and then, something of her life on the Island; and there, beside the path, in the silence of the wood, she told him of the years she had lived among the fisher folk, sprinkling the tale with many quaint Island idioms and flashes of Irish wit that quite charmed him, and he confessed that she was interesting as well as beautiful.

"You ought to go to school," he said at length.

"Oh, I'd like to!" she cried eagerly, clasping her hands. "I went to school here," she said, "till I outgrew it. Father Hennessey has taught me a lot of things. He taught me to read, at first."

"I know," he said, "but you ought to go to school away from here, where you can see things." He took her hand and she allowed it to lie in his passively. "Then you could go to college and grow up a fine woman."

"But what would mother—and what would father do while I was away?" she asked with a plaintive little smile.

"Oh, they'd get along," he said easily. "They'd be all right."

She shook her head and looked down at the ground. He crept closer to her and flung an arm around her neck and drew her down to him, whispering, "I love you."

The blood mounted to her cheeks and her lips quivered. He kissed her then, again and again, and a silence came upon them that was only broken by the call of birds overhead and the harsh scolding of the squirrels. Through the lace of the leaves and locked branches they saw the blue sky, cool, clear, and far off; and some of the light of the day got into their souls and a great joy was theirs in the cool of the silent wood. He was infinitely tender of her, while she lost herself to his kisses and words of love, and it seemed that they two were alone in all the world which had been made but for them. Past was forgotten, the future was not anticipated. Only the glorious present was, and that for them alone. He talked to her more of the land that lay across the Lake, the edge of which she had visited; of the life with which he was familiar and which he described in such a way that a great ambition came to her. Never before had her own life seemed so narrow and so cramped as now. She was oppressed by the contrast between it and what the world across the Lake held out to her. She turned her misty eyes to him and said,—

"Oh, you've made me want to go away—go away from here!"

It was not for him to know the misery he had made for her—how fair and how vivid and real was the picture he had painted; and how dreary and how gray was the life that she had lived and must live longer, compared to it, she thought. The joy of the hour before left her cold and miserable, and she became silent.

Presently he stood up.

"Come," he said, "let's go down on the beach."

She followed him meekly.

Coming to the end of the path at the edge of the clearing they saw Kergan's boat bobbing at the narrow wharf. He drew back then and she came up with him.

"Are your people at home?" he asked.

"No," she replied, "they're at the North Point. Andy McCann's supposed to be dying."

"What say to a sail?" he exclaimed.

She clasped her hands.

"I will!" she cried, "I'll take you."

"Can you manage the boat?"

A laugh was her reply as she ran past him across the clearing and out upon the shaking wharf. He followed her and joined her at the end. He helped her raise the brown, patched sail. She looked up at the sky knowingly. "There'll be wind soon," she said, "see that cloud." A billow of white against the blue of the western sky meant nothing to him and he did not reply. He sensed, however, a decided coolness.

"Will it storm?" he asked.

She laughed. "Never mind!" she cried, "get in."

Her eagerness and enthusiasm infected him. He stepped down into the boat and seated himself in the bow at one side.

"Can I help?" he asked.

"No—there!" She slipped the painter and a little breeze that swept off shore that instant struck the sails. The boat careened, righted, and slipped from the wharf.

She bore down on the helm and cried out to him to crouch low. The sail creaked above his head, and when he looked up he met her laughing eyes.

"Almost knocked you over, didn't it?" she said.

He smoothed his clothes and sat on the port rail, leaning towards her, supporting himself on one arm.

"You shouldn't sit that way," she said. "If she should lurch, you'd go over. Can you swim?"

It annoyed him thus to be cautioned by her, but he was conscious of her superior knowledge and sat up. Her question brought a blush to his cheeks as he answered that he could not. "I never had an opportunity to learn to swim when I was a little fellow," he said, "and lately I haven't had the time."

"You ought to take time," she said; "all the babies on the Island can swim."

He shot her a glance of inquiry, for he had seemed to perceive a note of something akin at least to contempt in her voice. But she was gazing forward along the rail and did not look at him.

"You can swim, I suppose?" he said.

She laughed lightly. "I can't remember when I couldn't," she replied. "When I was about four years old father tied a line under my arms and dropped me off the dock like a bag of sand."

He laughed then with her.

"I suppose I should learn," he agreed. There was silence between them for some time, and then she cried:

"Look over there in the west; there is a storm coming. I knew we'd get it; it's been so hot."

He twisted on his seat and stared at the heavens. Great banks of purplish clouds, shining silver at their soft, uneven edges, floated low in the sky. He heard the distant rumble of thunder, and the air upon his face was cool.

"Don't you think we'd better put back in?" he asked.

"What for? It'll only be a hatful of wind. I like it best when it blows." She had wound the line twice around her left hand and was pulling with all her strength, her body oblique, her feet pressing against a cleat in the flooring. The boat suddenly careened and he uttered a little cry.

"Look out," he called.

"You're not afraid, are you?" she asked. "See, I'm going to tack about——"

"You can't do it," he shouted, "you can't do it! Don't try, please don't." He was thoroughly frightened. The sail swung around so suddenly that he had barely time to crouch.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he asked peevishly. "I nearly went over that time."

She only laughed, and a whirl of wind found her bronze hair and loosened it, tumbling it about her shoulders. She let it fly at the wind's will, and timorous as he was and regretful that he had come with her, he could not help admiring her now. He relished the play of her strong muscles as she handled the line and the helm. The tugging of the sail compelled her to change her position somewhat and her skirt was drawn close about her, revealing every line of her lithe young body. As they rounded the south point of Pilot Island the wind caught them full and the boat seemed fairly to skim the surface of the water. Crouching in the bow he watched her. It was as though she had forgotten his presence and given herself up to the wind and the water. Like some old-world goddess she slanted before him, her lips parted showing her teeth; her full bosom rising and falling rhythmically from the effort she was making and the excitement of the moment. In the west the clouds were lower and blacker, and as he watched he was dazed by a sudden flash of lightning that rent the western sky as a curtain might be torn, revealing a pure white light behind.

"Put back in!" he cried, "it's blowing harder every minute!"

If she heard him she gave no sign.

"Can't you?" he shouted.

She did not reply, nor glance at him, even.

"I'm going to try the Door!" she called. "I can do it!"

"Oh my God, don't!" he cried, "you can't do it. Don't, please don't! We'll both go down. You never can do it!"

"Wait!"

Crouching in the bow, he twisted again, and saw that she was making direct for the narrow channel through the rocks at the south point of the Island. A great fear overcame him. On his knees he clutched the rail with both hands and his teeth chattered. The wind roared and the convulsed Lake tossed the tumbling boat as a child tosses a rubber toy. Through his mind surged a long train of thoughts; pictures vivid, real; pictures that he had believed were lost to his memory. He recalled various stories of drowning and the legend that a man's whole life is re-lived at the moment of death in the water. His breath came short and quick. He shuddered. The fighting waves seemed to reach up to him and he fell back on his heels, squatting. He turned to her then and cried,—

"For God's sake, don't, Margy! don't!"

"See!" she called as though she had not heard his wail, "we're making it—see!"

They were among the rocks, on the threshold of the Door. A flash bayoneted the sky and the thunder was like a cannon's report. He covered his face with his hands and held his breath, expecting each instant to hear the crunch and rip as the boat grounded upon the jagged teeth of rock now so close he could touch them by extending his arm over the rail. Then a wild thought came to him, and with a cry he uncovered his eyes and gazed madly at the girl in the stern, about whose face a wealth of bronze hair was blowing.

"My God!" he cried, "I should have known!"

So this was to be her revenge—her cold revenge for the wrong that he had done her, a wrong that to him, now, seemed so slight, so meaningless compared to the penalty he must pay. The sweetness of life, its beauty and the joy of living, were his to know then as never before. Frantically he cast about in his mind for a means of release. He could spring upon her where she sat sailing him through the gates of hell! He shuddered. What could he do with the boat? It was to him as though two deaths were held out to him and he was bidden to choose. He sank back and covered his face with his hands again and fell to rocking to and fro and moaning. He was startled by the girl's wild cry and looked up. The Door was behind them! In the west the clouds had become disintegrated and the wind suddenly had subsided.

"We did it!" she cried. "Oh, father would be proud!"

And as though she had told him, he knew then that he was safe, and with the thought came another that he tried to crush back. He had wronged her in the belief that she had meant to kill him. His lightness of manner returned to him at once, and he laughed.

"It was great!" he said.

"You were afraid, weren't you?" she called, and laughed.

She was laughing at him, he thought, and the thought piqued him.

"Well, I didn't know whether you could do it," he managed to say.

She was tacking about.

"We'll go back now," she said.

He wondered if she had perceived his fright. She gave no sign if she had, and he concluded, satisfied, that the excitement of the sail had obliterated all else. As they slipped back among the rocks he shuddered at thought of his escape and by what a narrow margin Death had missed him. He was on his feet as the boat bumped into the dock by her father's house. He leaped out and flung the painter over the post as she lowered the sail. She caught up her hair in great handfuls and knotted it at her neck. She smiled at him and he returned her smile.

"I shall never forget that sail," he said. "I can't."

She laughed.

"It was the best I ever had," she replied, and there was something either in remembrance of it or in her voice that caused a shiver to pass over him. They walked together a little way into the wood. There in the path he kissed her.

"Good-by," he said. "I can never forget you, Margy."

"Nor the sail?"

He shivered.

"No, nor the sail; I shall remember that as long as I live."

"Good-by," she said.

He became lost among the trees and she turned back into the clearing. Her father and mother had not yet returned. She went down to the end of the old dock and seated herself there, beside the bobbing boat. Upon the Lake little white-caps rose and fell drowsily, and from the Door came the boom of high waves. The sun was converting the water into molten copper. Her eyes caught a glint of light from some small object in the bow of the boat. She leaned over the rail. With a little cry she extended one arm and groped. It was his ring, a blood-red stone set in a broad band of Roman gold. She was moved at first to rush through the wood and return it to him. But he would miss it, she decided, and come back for it. She slipped the ring over one of her fingers and held her hand in front of her, tilting her head. She moved her hand that the light might strike the facets of the stone.

"I'll keep it for you," she murmured, and closed her hand tight upon it.

But he did not return. That night he left the Island on the Jane—Captain Spriggs—for Chicago.

In her little, bare room Margy found a bit of twine, and passing

it through the ring hung it about her neck. She dreamed of the sail and the ring, and when she awoke it was day. From her window she looked out upon the Lake. It was like an immense breadth of green silk shot with purple and shimmering beneath the sun.

VII.

THE CALL OF A HEART

It had not thus far been a fortunate summer for Mrs. Gibson. An excess of rain had speedily depleted the resorts across the Lake and her visitors were few. Add to these unpropitious circumstances a high mortality in her newly instituted hen-house, and it is small wonder that the good woman's usually large stock of cheerful spirits should run low. Only five tourists partook of her hospitality during the whole month of July, and try as she might to please them,—and her efforts went to the extreme of boiled dinners each day and two kinds of pie for breakfast,—there seemed always something at odds. Once she quite forgot a huge yellow cake and allowed it to burn up in the oven. At another time another cake of like dimensions “fell,” and when she cut it it was as though the dough had been molten lead. The apex of her misfortune was reached when she discovered on a wet and dismal morning late in the month that her rooster, the pride of her new fowl-house, had died overnight. Stiff and stark, he lay on his back just inside the netting of the hen-yard with his sturdy yellow legs pointing skyward symbolically. Mrs. Gibson went back into the house, and sinking into the chair by the kitchen window—his Reverence's chair she was wont to call it, for there Father Hennessey always sat when duty summoned him to the Widow's abode, near meal time—fell to sniffing. Her first spasm of melancholy over, her mood became one in which a sourness towards all the world in general and her Island neighbors in particular predominated. Her cheerfulness did not return even with the sun, that shortly after noon appeared and shone with a remarkable brilliance the balance of the day.

It was an ill time for Margy's call at the Island House. But for a fortnight she had suffered in silence the loneliness that had come back again to oppress her more than ever before. The close companionship with a fellow-creature that she had experienced for a few brief days lingered in her memory like the detached, incongruous fragments of a dream. In her home was not to be found the fellowship that her heart craved. Her mother did not appear to notice her unrest, and as for Kergan, he was too busy to give a thought to the home folk even, save at evening when the sun dipped below the water's western edge and gilded the placid surface of the Lake. Then it was the meal awaiting him and not the faces at the table that he considered. Only the Priest and Mrs. Gibson appeared to hold out

to the restless girl the interest that she hungered for. Father Hennessey she had seen often, and, as for years had been their wont, they had talked together. As a child it was he who first pointed out to her the beauties of the riotous nature amidst which she lived, and now as a woman grown, though still with the same child heart beating in her breast, it was to him she turned in her recreated loneliness. His sympathy cheered her and lessened the weight that lay like lead upon her heart, yet she discovered as the days passed that even his good spirit palled upon her now and then. So Mrs. Gibson alone remained to her. She had not seen even her for full three weeks, and it was with some misgivings that she sought the Island House to-day.

He had gone. This she knew, though for three days after the sail through the storm with him she had hoped he might return—at least for the ring. But he did not come, and hope died in her heart, and the old loneliness and a craving for companionship slipped in to make her miserable again. She wore the ring in her bosom yet, suspended from the string around her neck. There she would wear it always, she promised herself, until he came, when she would give it him. The thought of its nearness to her gave her a certain sort of pleasure now in his absence. It was as though a Fate, half kindly, had left it with her for just that purpose, for the little pleasure she obtained from having it. It was not that she cared for the owner as she had cared for Brian; but he had come upon her so mystically, and had taught her so many things, then vanished, leaving but a ring set with a blood-red stone. The bauble became a symbol of the meeting, the lesson, and the vanishment. It was not until several days after his going that she realized she did not even know his name. Somehow, she did not wish to learn it now. Knowledge that he had been sufficed, and it was fear almost that Mrs. Gibson might mention him that thus far had kept her from the Island House. But at last her longing for speech with someone other than her father and her mother broke down her hesitation. She would not seek to learn; but if the mistress of the Island House should speak of him she would not close her ears. But Mrs. Gibson did not. The guest that is gone is like a tale that is told, and Mrs. Gibson had other things to think of than a young man who for a week, perhaps, had enjoyed her hospitality.

Margy knocked lightly on the kitchen door, then pushed it open.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" Mrs. Gibson exclaimed. And she scowled so fiercely over the steel rims of her huge spectacles that Margy gladly would have fled.

"Shut th' dure an' sit down," snapped the mistress of the Island House.

Her eyes wide with wonder at her old friend's unaccustomed mood,

Margy sank upon a chair by the door, hardly knowing what to say. It was well that Mrs. Gibson gave her time to say nothing at all, for she straightway snapped—and her needles clicked viciously,—

“Have ye anny eggs?”

Margy found her voice then.

“Why, Mrs. Gibson,” she exclaimed amazedly, “I thought you had your own hens now!”

“I had, but th’ rooster’s dead!” And the worthy dame sniffed and swallowed, an extraordinary display of emotion for her.

Margy laughed.

Mrs. Gibson glanced at her.

“What are ye laughin’ at?” she inquired with something akin to downright anger in her tone.

“Do—do”—Margy bit her lip; her eyes were very bright—“do your roosters lay eggs, Mrs. Gibson?”

Mrs. Gibson let her knitting fall into her lap.

“Margy Kergan,” she snapped, “if ye have no more thought for a body’s feelin’s thin t’ make fun iv my dead rooster ye’d better go home!” So saying she snatched up her work and fell to knitting again at tremendous speed, and so put about was she that she was quite unconscious until hours afterwards that her moment’s anger had resulted in the dropping of three stitches.

“I’m sorry, Mrs. Gibson,” Margy said. She drew her chair nearer the window. “I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings. I guess mother has some eggs that I can bring across. Shall I to-morrow?”

Thereupon with many digressions Mrs. Gibson related the misfortune that had overtaken her. Here, then, was a fellow-creature with whom all had not gone well; and Margy’s sympathy, keen because of the misery in her own heart, went out to the woman freely. During the recital Mrs. Gibson sniffled much, and once, as she described her discovery of the dead rooster, she with difficulty restrained her tears.

“An’ I paid Andy McCann eighty-five cints f’r him,” she added wofully. “’Twouldn’t be so bad only losin’ him, though he was a beautiful burrd,” she said, “but I’m losin’ th’ eighty-five cints as well.” It was the real grief behind the words that Margy understood; and her own spirit was so weak within her that for the moment the rooster’s death marked a crisis in Mrs. Gibson’s life that was quite commensurate with the crisis that the month had brought into her own.

Afterwards they talked of Brian.

How good it was to the girl to hear his name. Yes, he would be coming back soon now; the summer was well on. And it had been lonely; and it was lonelier now.

Once, many years before, Mrs. Gibson had lived for a brief half

year in the city down the Lake, and Margy, knowing this, sought to learn from her of the life there, and of the people, and of the dangers.

"So yer fearin' ye may lose him, arre ye?" Mrs. Gibson inquired blandly.

Margy shook her head.

"Well, have no fear," the woman said, "Brian Dean's not that kind iv a bye. I knew his mother, gurr! He couldn't be that kind and hers——"

"I didn't know," Margy murmured.

"Well, Margy Kergan, ye ought t'!" Mrs. Gibson snapped. "An' ye ought t' be ashamed o' yerself fer thinkin' sech thoughts. He ought t' be told; that's it, he ought t' be told."

A look of fright came into Margy's eyes as she cried:

"Oh Mrs. Gibson, don't! You won't tell him, will you? You won't, will you?" Then she went on: "It's so lonely here without him. You don't know how lonely. Nobody seems t' understand but Father Hennessey——"

"Ah, bless him!" Mrs. Gibson put in.

"And he laughs at me when I worry and tells me not to fear; that he'll come when he's wanted. But—oh Mrs. Gibson, I want him now! I want him so!"

It was a call from her heart, and something of the pain that lurked behind made its appeal to Mrs. Gibson.

"Thayre, dearie," she cooed in her motherly, comforting way, "thayre, thayre! It's as th' good Father says—God bless 'im! Brian'll come back t' ye, dearie, sure as I'm a-settin' here. An', Margy, when you're feelin' lonesome an' weary-like, come across t' th' Island House an' we'll cheer each other up. Will ye?"

Margy nodded, thankful in her heart for the comfort she had already received.

To reach home the quickest she took the path through the woods. Every step brought back memories, vivid to her overwrought mind, of the times they had trudged it side by side—she and Brian. But upon these memories obtruded another that now she sought to banish—memory of him who had, one day, appeared so suddenly there before her. He had bidden her come, and she had followed, resistlessly, unknowingly, heedlessly. As she reached the clearing the sun was balanced like half an orange on the western water-line. The Lake was a caldron of gold. And banners of violet, purple, orange, and gold were on the sky. She stood a moment as one transfixed, drinking in the beauty of the scene, but as she watched her body became weak, and lifting her face she murmured, "Oh Brian, come back, for it's so lonely here and I'm so sick and tired of waiting."

VIII.

THE LAST DAYS

WITH the first breath of autumn a new life and new activities began for the dwellers on the Island. The fishing season over,—closed temporarily by law,—a month of hard work lay before them, work to be done with a will and straight away. There were nets to be gone over before the cold became so keen as to stiffen practised fingers. Wood must be cut and sawed in lengths and piled behind the houses, and the boats must be drawn ashore, repaired, and housed. So, ere long, the ring of the axe was heard in the woodland as little by little the trees were eaten away from the edge, nearer and nearer the heart of the forest.

Until the middle of October the days continued brilliant; the sky was unflecked by clouds and the sun was dazzling on the water. To be sure, the air was cold, but it was dry and crisp, just proper air for work out-of-doors, and such work was continued with a will by all the Island men. Nor were the women idle. Many preparations for the approaching winter—a long, unbroken period of freezing cold and high-piled snow—were theirs to make, and it was only in the afternoons that Margy managed to escape from the house and the tasks her mother had set for her. When the work of the day was done she was wont to creep out upon the rocks that lined the narrow channel at the Door, and from there watch the distant passage of the lazy boats up and down the Lake. As the summer waned these craft increased in number, as though zealous to accomplish much delayed work before the seal of ice should be placed upon the Lake, locking it for many months. The round, low-lying whale-backs she followed with her eyes until the wall of woodland hid them. Lumbering ore barges crept along the water; schooners, big-sailed, like huge birds, skimmed the surface of the Lake, and now and then a double-funnelled steamer sped past, leaving in its wake a long, undulating feather of smoke, like a huge plume.

One day she saw a north-bound passenger steamer away down the Lake and thought it was making for the East-Shore landing. She stood up on the rock and, shielding her eyes, gazed at the tall, trim craft eagerly. Her hope had deceived her, for the boat steamed on straight north and became lost. She sank down upon the rock with a little sob and fell to crying. She made no effort to stop her tears, until, suddenly, she heard her name called and turned about. On shore, watching her, stood the Priest, and he called to her gayly, as was his custom when meeting woful faces.

"There, gurr! come in here. Shure ye'll be fallin' off if ye don't look out—like Terrance Gibson's goat that wanted to look at himself

in th' water at th' end iv th' Island House dock and got skairt 'n' fell in."

He chuckled at the recollection, and Margy, becoming infected with his gayety, laughed with him. She picked her way carefully yet swiftly over the rocks and joined the Father on the shore. He saw that she had been crying, and, divining something of the reason for her sadness, exclaimed:

"Thayre, thayre, Margy; shure you've waited all summer fer him; can't ye stand it for th' little while longer before he comes? The sayson's over; they'll have no use for him down there; he'll be comin' anny day now."

She did not reply, though his kindly assurance comforted her somewhat. She kept her eyes upon the ground as they walked on together.

"Where were you going, Father?" she asked finally,—“to our house?”

"No, child," he said, and sighed.

She looked up quickly and caught his eye, then let hers fall before his steady gaze.

"I was only walkin'," he said. "'Tis a fine day." He hesitated an instant, then asked, "Have ye anny memory of Janet O'Toole, Margy, gurrl?"

"Some," she said. "Mother told me about her once—when I was a little girl. I'd asked her why Mrs. O'Toole was always so sad. She told me about Janet then."

"Not all, I guess," Father Hennessey muttered, as though to himself. "I've just been to her mother's house," he said. "Janet's dead."

"Dead!" There was a mingled note of awe and wonder in the voice of the young girl. She regarded the Priest steadily with wide eyes.

"Yes," he said. "The Father in Chicago sent me word. She died there."

"Didn't her mother know?"

Father Hennessey shook his head sadly.

"You can tell yer mother," he said; "likely she'd want to see Missus O'Toole."

The poor little story of the girl—that part of it that her mother had told her—became vivid in Margy's mind. Janet was an Island girl. When she was fifteen her father was lost in a storm on the Lake. His upturned boat was found among the rocks at the Door that before and since had all too often claimed their victims. His body was never recovered. The widow and the girl lived alone for three years in a little house near the North Point. As the months went by the

woman's sadness so played upon her child that she ran away. She was heard from after a year. She was in Chicago. Andy McCann saw her there on one occasion, and the report he made on his return was not reassuring.

And now she was dead, there in Chicago, all alone. Margy shuddered. Janet was beautiful she remembered her mother had said. She wondered if Brian had ever seen her.

"Was she a bad girl, Father?" she asked simply. The Priest, who had fallen into a musing mood, was startled by the question and its suddenness. Looking down, his eyes met Margy's, uplifted, questioning, and in her eyes he read nothing but her candor.

He shook his head. "'Tis not f'r us t' wonder," he said sadly. "I don't know, Margy, child, whether she was or not; she's dead, an' God rest her soul. Th' big city's a terrible place, Margy. There's many th' gurrl that's gone there, alone, and has never returned nor been heard of. It's like th' Lake; it claims th' unwary. It's beautiful maybe, but ye can't depend upon it. See out there; how peaceful th' water is under th' sun. But down below, Margy, there's a fearful tuggin' and a pullin', and whoever goes down there never comes up again—or if he does come up, he's dead."

She shivered.

"It's th' same with th' big city," he added weakly. His words struck deep into her heart and she was silent for a space.

Perceiving her mood and regretting that he had even momentarily given away to his sadness, he sought to cheer the girl in the way that had never failed him. So he exclaimed with all his most familiar unction:

"Here, here, cheer up, gurrl; fling away th' load ye have on yer heart an' look at that squirrel!"

She smiled then, and they stopped and watched the squirrel. A nut in his mouth, he squatted twenty feet ahead of them at the edge of the clearing. For a moment he blinked at them suspiciously, then, gaining courage, as they did not move, lowered his head and proceeded to dig a grave for the nut. This done, he patted the earth and whisked away.

"That's what you should do, gurrl," the Priest said, "bury yer sadness as he did that nut." She looked up at him, smiling, and he went on reminiscently:

"Yer more 'r less like Bridget Clancy, Margy. No, ye never knew her; she passed away before yer time, God rest her soul! Bridget was a-dying by inches fur more'n twenty years. Day by day she grew weaker 'n' weaker, but peaceful-like an' happy, mind ye, without pain. At last th' good Doctor—'twas old Doctor Morgan, o' Charleton—told her she had only ten days fer t' live. Bridget, as soon as he told

her, began t' fuss an' fret. Those ten days t' Bridget Clancy were longer than th' whole o' those twenty years she'd been a-layin' in bed an' eatin' not a blessed thing but pea-soup. Aye, gurr! she fussed an' she fretted those ten days a-fearin' she'd live longer. She did!—five days longer! An', if ye leave it t' me, 'twas nothin' in th' world but th' disappointment killed her then!"

He launched a deep guffaw.

"Seem's though 'twas yesterday," he added, "an' here 'tis eighteen year gone if it's a day." He was glad of the girl's low laugh and looked down at her. "'Tis the same with you, Margy," he said. "Here you are a-cryin' at th' last minute because Brian don't come, an' after a-waitin' happy and calm like all th' summer long."

"I know," she answered simply, "but it's been a great while."

At the edge of the wood he left her, and she stood there and looked after him until he became lost among the trees.

She was alone. How absolutely alone she was she had not realized as she did now. Where should she go? she asked herself as she wandered into the path. To whom might she go and lay bare her bleeding heart? There was no one. Home? She became numb at the thought. Sooner or later her father must know, and she shuddered at the thought of what his knowledge might—*would* mean. She knew him as a man of passion, of passion uncontrollable once it was aroused. Perhaps he would kill her. The thought was not horrid to her. She had not learned to fear death, and now would it not come as a blessed relief? She could *die* at home, if she could not live there. The wood offered her nothing, and the Lake—— She shuddered and shrank from the wild idea that came to her that moment. She would die at home. Whatever came, she would die at home. How much sweeter, how much better, that than to die so far away, like poor Janet. The story of the girl who had sought her own and found it recurred to her with the force of a blow. The horror of the story had a meaning for her now that it never had had before. How like her own it was, after all. How like her own! It was this likeness that bore her down, and she became weak and faint. Things wavered before her eyes and she groped her way from tree to tree back along the path. At last she came to the edge of the clearing. The sun had vanished and the sky was gray and as cheerless as her heart. Beneath, the Lake lay leaden. She uttered a little, weak cry and ran across the open place to her father's house.

Her mother was busy in the kitchen and she found her there.

"Janet O'Toole's dead, mother," she said, sinking upon a chair by the window.

The woman's arms dropped limp at her sides and her jaw fell.

"Janet! Dead!" she exclaimed.

"Father Hennessey told me to tell you."

Her mother quickly regained the usual composure that Margy's announcement had destroyed, though not by the shock of it. Her teeth came together with an audible click.

"It's well," she said. "Her poor mother's suffered for her these many years; 'twas well her father died an' was spared th' disgrace of it!"

A cry, behind, caused her to turn quickly from the table. Margy, pale, limp, clutching at her throat, was bent over in her chair and sobbing.

"What's th' matter, gurrl!" her mother cried, springing to her side and slipping a strong arm around her shoulder.

A weak moan fraught with misery was her reply.

"Look up; arre ye sick?" the woman asked breathlessly.

Margaret lifted her head and her eyes met her mother's. The gaze of each was long and fixed. Without, the storm, foretold by the leaden sky and Lake, was gathering. The wind whistled around the corner of the house and the moan in the tree-tops was low, insistent.

"Margy!" her mother cried, and in her voice there was given sound to the agony that had seized upon her heart.

The girl wrenched away her eyes and rose.

"Yes," she said, "I'm sick. I'm sick, sick, sick—here!" And she struck her breast over her heart.

A low moan issued from her mother's lips, and she sank upon the chair and flung her apron over her face.

"Oh my God! my God!" she muttered, "to think——"

In the kitchen where they were there was borne to them above the wail of the wind Kergan's cry from the dock. The woman snatched away the apron from her face and into her eyes there came a look of fright.

"Mother! Mother!"

With the holy word upon her lips Margy sank to her knees and hid her face in her mother's lap.

"Thayre, gurrl—go—go upstairs. I'll try t' tell him. God knows what he'll do—God knows. Go—go before he comes. Leave him to me. Go."

Margy opened the door.

"Oh mother, mother, if I could die!" she moaned.

"Go—hurry—he's coming."

She closed the door and crept up the dark stairs. In her little, bare room she looked about her blankly. Then, with a cry, she flung herself face downward on the bed and lay there, still, motionless. She heard the wind among the tree-tops louder now, and the crash and boom of the Lake. After a long time she fell asleep.

IX.

THE RETURN

WHEN she awoke it was quite dark in the little room. The cold had roused her, and she lay huddled, frightened, till her senses gathered. The storm had not subsided while she slept, and she still heard the wild howl of the wind in the tree-tops and the roar and crash of the Lake. She listened for the rattle of rain on the roof, and not hearing it experienced a peculiar sort of satisfaction. She had grown morbidly sensitive to little things. Presently she slipped off the bed and moved noiselessly across the uncarpeted floor to the window. A strange, weird light hovered above the Lake, and in its phosphorescence she could distinguish the white-cap blotches on the water. The motion fascinated her. To her wide-eyed gaze the Lake out there was inviting; it beckoned her and was warm. She was cold. She shivered. The same idea that once before had come to her surged into her mind again, and a sickness seized her and she sank upon her knees. After a moment the sickness passed, and with its passage the full horror of the idea dawned for her and she covered her face with her hands and sobbed. When the spasm of acute misery left her she rose and went to the door. Her eyes had accustomed themselves to the darkness and she was able to make out the poor furnishings of the little room. In one corner stood an old chest of drawers that had belonged to her mother's mother. Beside it was a chair. The foot of the bed reached quite to the middle of the room and there was the stand opposite. Something black lay across the foot of the bed, and as she stared it seemed to move. She shrank back with horror and would have cried out in her fright, when she remembered. It was her shawl. She had flung it there. Snatching it up she drew it around her shoulders, glad of the warmth it afforded her. The load lifted slowly from her heart. Her head became strangely light; then of a sudden all her calmness came back to her, alone in the little, bare, dark room. She leaned against the door and lifted her face and closed her eyes. That instant she knew the shame, horrid, revolting, as she had not known it before. It lay upon her soul like a leaden weight. The greater the effort she made to cast it off, to fling it far from her, the deeper it seemed to sink. She wondered if death could be like this. Suppose it were death; if it were, how happy she could be! It was hard to die; yet if Death could cure the sickness that was eating at her heart, she could fling open the door gladly at his quiet knock and bid him welcome. Perhaps even now he lingered in the narrow hall. Her hand was on the latch; she raised it and opened the door. In the darkness she could see nothing beyond, and shivered. At the top of the stairway she hesitated. She drew the shawl closer about her throat and made to descend, but as she groped with one foot for the

step she heard voices below and drew back. She remembered how she had fled before her father's coming, and now it was his voice that she heard. She strained her ears. He was speaking low, and she could not distinguish his words. As she listened she heard her mother say,—

"You mustn't! you mustn't!"

She knew they were talking of her and the realization made her sick at heart. An edge of light shone through a chink in the door at the bottom of the stairs and she crept cautiously down. As her hand hovered over the latch she heard her father's voice again. It was quite clear. She heard the curse he called down upon her for bringing shame into his house. She bowed her head, like a suppliant. Then she felt the faintness creeping over her again, and his voice, which had sounded so near, seemed now a long way off, as though he were calling to her from out upon the Lake.

"I'll kill him! I'll kill that Brian Dean!"

She flung back her head, and every muscle of her body quivered. She opened the door quickly.

"Don't! Don't say that, father!" she cried.

She shrank, blinded, from the light that was in the room and sank upon the first step of the stairs. She heard the moan that escaped her mother's lips and the exclamation of her father's sullen wrath. Her mother went to her then and helped her up and drew her away to the farther side of the table. She sank upon a low stool at her feet and raised her face. Their eyes met, and each read in the other's the misery of their suffering. Kergan stood before the fireplace with his back to them. He had never before seemed so big and strong to the girl as now. The mat of his thick hair fell in a tangled mass upon the collar of his shirt. She shuddered and let her eyes wander to the lamp on the table. The rag of red flannel in the glass bowl fascinated her. She felt her mother's cool hand on her hot brow and closed her eyes.

Slowly Kergan faced about and lifted his head. Passion was in every line of his face. He breathed hard and pulled at his big beard. His great breast heaved convulsively, and he approached the table like a huge cat.

Margy clutched at her mother's hands. "Don't! Don't!" she cried. "Mother, don't let him hurt me!"

She crouched and turned away her face.

Kergan brought his fist down upon the table.

"By God!" he roared, "I'll not stand it."

She held her breath, and her body quivered in anticipation of the blow. She remembered vividly how she had once seen Larry O'Toole beat Jennie. Now she was to be beaten. She would be brave.

He was speaking again, low and determined, as though calling into play every force at his command to restrain his consuming passion. His voice quivered.

"Boy 'n' man I've lived on this Island fur forty year, an' not till now has anny o' mine brought shame t' this house. By God! I'll not stand it. Ye've lived here 'n' had yer own way all yer life. Yer mother's loved ye 'n' so've I, an' now ye've ruined us. Ye've made yer bed; sleep in it! Go t' him as has wronged ye; maybe he'll take ye in. Ye may learn in time——" He hesitated, and she heard a swift, hissing, intaking of breath. "I could kill ye an' him too," he cried.

"Kergan!" her mother screamed, and bent over her child and drew her close.

Margy flung back her head, broke from the guarding arms, and, rising, faced her father. Her eyes glowed with an unwonted fire. Her hands were tightly clenched. She held her arms rigid at her sides.

"Kill me!" she cried. "Kill me! The heart in me's dead; kill th' rest o' me!"

Her father quailed before her eyes; there was that in them then that burned him to the heart.

"Why don't you kill me!" she screamed.

Kergan wrenched his eyes from hers and turned his back upon her. "Damn ye!" he muttered.

"Margy, Margy, don't anger him, he'll do ye harrm; he can't hold back."

"Hush, mother," she said. Then she spoke to her father again.

"I'll go. You'll not be troubled by me any more. I'll go to-morrow—to-night if you want me to. I'll take the fish-boat to-morrow morning. You'll not see me again. I don't know where I'll go, but it'll be somewhere a long way off. You'll not hear from me nor see me again. I won't come back."

"Go, then," her father flung at her over his shoulder. "It's hell fer ye sooner er later; ye've found th' road; be on yer way."

"Kergan!" her mother cried, and throwing her apron over her face fell to rocking back and forth, moaning.

"I'm tellin' you I'll go," she ran on. "I'll go to-night. I'll go in the storm. I've been in storms before. I sailed you home from Charleton once in a worse storm than this; and you lay crying like a baby in the bottom of the boat with a broken leg. And when the wind blows again as it does to-night you can remember that and remember when I went away. You needn't be afraid. Nobody'll know. You can tell 'em I got sick of the Island and went to Chicago."

"It's th' place fer ye," he snarled at the fire, "you an' Janet O'Toole! Go! Go t' yer Brian that give ye yer start!"

Her teeth came together with a snap. The glory which had an instant before been hers fled, and she crouched like an animal about to spring. Her fingers stiffened and her bosom rose and fell.

"Say that again, and I'll kill ye!" she hissed.

He wheeled quickly and at sight of her his jaw fell and his face went ashy pale. Something of his determination was hers now. He realized, albeit dumbly, that she would carry out her threat. Face to face he read in her that part of himself, the worst part, that until now he had beaten back and conquered. The import of the moment awed him. He could not speak. He stared at the girl before him, lashed to a frenzy by his taunts. He shrank before her. Instinct, the instinct of the animal which was large in her, told her her own turn had come. She stood erect, her eyes leaping fire. Then she whipped his soul until it winced beneath each stinging caress of her keen-edged words. Her strength now was the strength that had been his. It was the glory of her wonderful youth, coupled with the frenzy of an outraged womanhood, that triumphed over him, her father. He struggled, and when she paused he only faintly muttered, weak, sick, "If he loves ye, why don't he come f'r ye—now?"

"He needn't come!" she cried. "He needn't come."

He could only sneer as he turned away.

In the moment's silence that ensued she heard above the shriek of the wind and the roar of the Lake another cry that sent her heart leaping into her throat. Her body swayed. Evidently neither he nor her mother had heard. She listened. Again she heard the call,—

"Coo-ee!—Coo-ee!"

Her mother was still rocking back and forth with her face covered. Her father, staring into the bed of embers on the hearth, had not moved.

"Coo-ee!—Coo-ee!"

Closer now; she looked about her, her breath coming quick and fast. She would flee, but she was held as though by chains. Then all her strength left her, and, weak and sick, she staggered to the stairway and sank upon the lowest step. At the sound of her movement her mother snatched away her apron. Across the window there was the swift passage of a black shadow. Footfalls, quick, alert, sounded on the little porch. Kergan started violently. He went hastily to the door, and as a single knock fell upon the wood he flung it back. Brian Dean stood there.

"You!" cried Kergan, and started as though a ghost confronted him.

"Why, yes," was Brian's calm reply as he glanced wonderingly from one to another. "I came back to-night. It's blowing hard, but I came through the woods." He shut the door behind him. Ker-

gan had backed to the hearth and stood there staring at him, his face pale and drawn. Margy, on the stairs, held her breath. The meeting which for weeks she had shuddered at thought of had come at last, and had found her weak and sick. She did not move her eyes from the figure by the door. It was Brian; the face was his; but she had never seen him before as he was now. It was his clothes. The picture that she had treasured distinct in her mind was of a boy in the rough garments of the fisher-folk. Here was a youth who was different. He was like another whom she had tried to forget. But the face was the same; and as she gazed at him in the little instant of silent wonder she saw the quick changes of expression, gladness giving way to amaze; amaze to doubt; doubt to puzzlement.

"Well," he murmured interrogatively.

It was his voice that brought his senses back to Kergan. His hands clutched. He thrust forward his face, contorted with hate:

"You dog! you would come here!" he snarled.

"Stop!"

Margy was standing on the stairs, erect, quivering. She sprang between the boy and the man and, turning, faced her father.

"You remember what I said!" she cried. "I'll kill you."

"Margy!"

Brian seized her and drew her back.

"What does all this mean?" He gazed at the woman leaning forward in her chair, across the table; at the man on the hearth.

The girl looked up at him. He heard the murmur of his name as she hid her face against his shoulder.

"Ask her," Kergan exclaimed, "if ye need t' know. Can't ye guess?"

"Oh Brian; don't, don't."

He looked down into the pleading eyes that she lifted just then to his. It may be that in them he read the solution of his quandary. A little cry escaped his lips, and he drew her close to him.

"Margy!"

The tone of his voice cut deep into her heart. Never before had the love she bore him seemed so great as now, when indulgence was denied her.

"I'm going away," she said quite clearly. "You don't understand."

She broke from his arms and snatched up her shawl. He noted the movements of her body, and his throat tightened.

"Come," she said, "they don't want us here."

He hesitated.

"In the storm?" he asked.

"Yes."

She drew back the door. As he passed out behind her he turned.

Kergan still stood on the hearth staring down at the bed of glowing embers. His wife's face was hidden between her arms outstretched upon the table. The lamp was burning low. He closed the door. There was a scream, but he did not turn back. At the window Margaret had stopped. He joined her there. They saw Kergan standing beside his wife in the bare room.

"Mother! Mother!" the girl sobbed, and would have fallen but for the strong arm that supported her.

The wood loomed black before them. They crossed the clearing swiftly. High up the wind moaned, as though a million souls, lost, like hers, roamed and groped in the tree-tops.

X.

THE MANTLE OF THE WOOD

A LOON laughed stridently and Brian felt the girl's body quiver within his encircling arm.

"Don't be afraid," he said.

She felt his strength and was momentarily glad, though she realized, the more keenly now, perhaps, due to her instant's forgetfulness, that the hour she had equally longed for and dreaded had come at last.

He had returned to her, had kept his promise, and she gloried in her faith in him. Yet how had he found her when he came? She shuddered at the question.

"Are you cold?" he asked.

"No," she managed to reply, with a little, quick intaking of her breath.

At the edge of the clearing they stopped. Before them rose the black wall of the wood.

"Shall we take the path?" His voice was calm and even.

"Where are we going?" she asked blankly.

"Nowhere."

It seemed to him now in their nearness that he had never left her. The impressions once so vivid of the city across the Lake, of the granite cañons through which he had wandered dazed of a Saturday night, the rush, the swirl, the ceaseless noise of living he had heard—had now become a jumble in his memory, fragments of a confused, unmeaning dream.

How still it was in the wood. The boom of the Lake behind came as from a long way off, and even the moaning of the wind above was remote. He forgot, an instant, the occasion. What he *knew* left him. It was as it had been before, when they had walked together along this same path, conscious of nothing save each other's presence. But when Margaret spoke memory surged back upon him.

"Let's sit down here," she said.

Instinct had told her where they were; the log was there and they seated themselves upon it. He still held his arm about her.

All summer he had counted the days to his return to her, and now that they were together again he craved a taste of the joy so long denied him that had been his of old.

For a long time neither spoke. She felt it was not for him to question her, but for her to confess, yet she shrank. Conscious though she was that he *knew*, she realized that he waited for her to tell him everything, that he rightly expected to have the story from her own lips. Not once had it occurred to her to hide her misery from him. It was his to know her heart, and hers to show it him.

"Brian," she said at last, "why did you come back?"

He withdrew his arm, and though she could not see him in the black she felt that he had drawn away and was gazing at where she was.

"For you," he answered; "I came for you, Margy."

Her sigh was only like another night sound and did not cut his heart, as it would if he had seen her face.

"But you must go away again," she murmured,—*"back there."*

"I'm going," he answered calmly, *"when we're married!"*

A little, weak, pathetic cry escaped her. "No! No! Don't say that! Oh Brian, don't say that; it breaks my heart!"

She fell to crying quietly.

"There, there," he murmured.

"Oh, don't!" she cried. "Brian," she went on less tremulously, "we can't be married—you and I—we can't, Brian."

He drew near her then and slipped an arm about her waist again.

"Tell me," he urged. "Tell me, and don't be afraid."

"You won't understand," she said; "you can't, Brian. No one would understand. Sometimes I think I don't, even. I didn't *then*; as much as I do now. But, oh Brian, I was so lonely! I used to walk along the path day after day and cry all to myself; it seemed such a long time, and, Brian, sometimes I got to thinking maybe you'd never come back at all. I'd crawl out on the rocks at the Door and sit there gazing off down the Lake and pretend every boat that crawled along the water was bringing you back to me. They all went past. There didn't a one put in to the Island." Her voice had sunk so low he could barely hear her. "Lots of times," she went on, "I've thought how much better it would be if I should slip off the rocks there and go down, down, where it looked so quiet and so soft, on the sand at the bottom. Then I'd be frightened at myself and run back into the woods—these woods—and find some hidden place and sit there 'most all day—alone—and cry."

He made no answer, and she went on brokenly,—

"Then—then—he came." She stopped, catching her breath.

The wind moaned among the tree-tops and the Lake boomed behind.

"I met him on the path, and after that I met him again and again for a week. I got to thinking he was you—oh, you can't understand, Brian, but I was so lonely. I'd never felt lonely here on the Island before, but you had always been here. When he came it seemed to me that maybe God had sent him to make it less lonesome. I didn't mean to do wrong—maybe he didn't. And one day when father and mother were away I sailed with him. A storm came up, but I kept her in the wind. We went through the Door out upon the Lake. It blew and blew, as it does to-night, and the sky got all black, and, Brian, he was afraid and crawled down in the boat and begged me to put in. I laughed at him. I knew we might go over, but somehow I didn't care. It was wicked, Brian, but he had hurt me, and though I didn't feel it then, I wanted to sail on and on forever, away from the Island that had become so—so—black to me—sail on and on to you. I didn't answer him when he called to me from where he crouched in the boat, the big waves breaking over him. My hair fell down and the wind blew it in my eyes, and his face was as pale as moonlight. By and by he stopped begging. I knew then he was a coward. And then the wind went down as suddenly as it had come up and I got the boat to the dock. I never saw him again. Oh God, if only we hadn't come back! If only we hadn't come back!" She pressed her hands to her face and listened for his voice. A shiver passed over her, and, half crouching, she peered into the surrounding darkness.

"And no one ever saw him," she cried.

Still there was no reply.

"Brian! Brian!" she called, "where are you?"

"Here." The sound of his voice came to her from a distance, and she knew that he had slipped away noiselessly while she talked and now was walking up and down the path before her.

"What are you doing?" she asked plaintively. "Brian, what are you thinking? Don't you see now that you must go back—back there—and leave me? Forget me, dear, and all about the Island. It will be easier now. You'll never see me. I'll go away too; I can't make father understand!"

Her words choked in her throat and her heart lay like lead in her bosom. She was cold, and drew the shawl closer about her shoulders.

"Don't you see?" she pleaded. "Don't you see?"

Her love for him was consuming her. At his quick appearance before her in the doorway of her home it had all come back, four-fold strong, and it seemed to her now as she lay bare her soul before him that perhaps she might be dying. She prayed that it would soon be over, that she might be at rest. Memories of their childhood, their splendid youth, their child love, crowded into her mind, and she no

longer sought to beat back the misery that surged over her. She slipped to her knees beside the log and, bending her head, cried silently. As she knelt thus she heard his voice close above her.

"I understand."

Her heart gave a quick leap in her bosom. She could go her way now in peace, for he had told her that he understood. He believed that she had meant no wrong.

"Brian," she said, "tell me what I must do. Tell me where to go; where no one will know me, and I can work. Tell me, you have been away; you know more than I do; I have always been here, living among the trees beside the Lake. Some day, maybe, after a long, long time, I'll come back—back here—just for a day; but no one will know me. Tell me, Brian, where to go."

She felt his nearness though she could not see him. She reached, groping, and touched his hand, and her cold fingers clung to it.

"Margy," he said, "you needn't tell me any more. I understand, dear." She caught her breath at the word of endearment. "Somehow," he continued, sinking upon the log beside her, "being away so long from the Island has taught me a lot of things I didn't know before and has made me look at things different. One day a fellow in the office got caught stealing money and they arrested him. The foreman was skairt for fear he'd lose his job and began to investigate. He found the fellow had a sister that had gone away from home to live the way she wanted to. Her father had driven her out and wouldn't let her come back again. Her mother was dead. She'd been sick and was all alone; the fellow she went with had deserted her. Jim—that was his name, Jim Thurber—found her down on what they call the levee, where nobody decent lives. He got a doctor for her, and it was to buy her medicine that he'd stole the money. The foreman found out about it, and when Jim was taken into the police court the Judge had heard all about the case too. He let the fellow go and wrote a letter to Mr. Mercer and Jim got his job back. The foreman said there wasn't another man in Chicago that would take him in again but Mr. Mercer. It set me a-thinking, and somehow I couldn't see how Mr. Mercer could a-done different. I guess it's the way God sort o' evens things up. Your father was half crazy at first, Margy, but even by this time maybe he's thinking different. And *your* mother ain't dead, like that girl's, and you'll find they'll take *you* again. Go back home, Margy, go back home. Then to-morrow I'll come and you'll see it won't be so bad after all."

"I can't; I can't, Brian," she sobbed. "He told me to go away."

"I know he did; but he didn't know what he was saying. You'll see he'll be waiting for you."

"I can't."

"But you must; you mustn't stay out here; don't you see, it'd make it all the worse—for me as well as you. Come."

He helped her to rise.

"Don't cry," he said, "it don't do any good to cry. You'll see it will come out all right. Do as I say."

He but half realized the significance of the step he was asking her to take. He was acting on impulse, thoughtlessly. As for her, she suffered him to lead her out of the wood. At the edge they stood a moment in the wind. Over the Lake hung the peculiar, ghostly light that always hovered there on such wild nights. Holding her closer, he asked, his lips almost brushing her face,—

"Margy, who was he?"

She shrank from him and uttered a little cry.

She felt his arm tighten about her. Could she have seen his face that the darkness hid she would have cried out. In that instant of revolt he asked these questions of his heart: Could she have lied to him? Could all her anguish have been assumed? Would she shield him who had so basely wronged her?

"I don't know." In her tone, resigned, despairing, there was that which made his heart cry out in shame.

"Never mind," he said.

Suddenly a beam of yellow light from a window of the house across the clearing shone brilliant in the black.

"See," he cried, "your mother, Margy; the light's for you! Go home; I'll wait. Will you go?"

"Yes." Her voice was faint and weak now.

"Go, then."

Still she clung to him as in the past she had, but he put her from him gently.

"I'll go back to the wood—I want to think," he said. "I want to think, Margy, what will be the best to do."

"Brian," she whispered, "kiss me."

Watching, he saw her figure cross the bar of light. She was going home. Stealthily she approached the step at the door of her father's house. She hesitated an instant, then, quickly gathering her skirts in one hand whilst with the other she clutched the shawl at her throat, she turned and fled.

A long time he paced up and down the path, then came again to the edge of the wood. In the window of the house across the clearing the light still shone. He sounded the cry that they had made their own. No answer came. He called again. He knew then she was not there. A great fear smote him. The Lake boomed. Aloft the wind shrieked in the tree-tops. There was but one place where she would go. There he would go for her. He turned and ran swiftly back into the wood.

XL.

FROM OUT THE STORM

"Roar on, ye storms, nor ask fer mercy," quoted Father Hennessey. "B-r-r-r-r!" he added with a little shiver, "an' that's what yer doin' t' be sure."

He closed the book with a resounding thwack and flung it on the table. He stared at the fire on the wide hearth where a great log blazed and crackled. And as he stared a gust of wind, wilder than its fellows, swooped down the chimney and sent a belch of choking smoke out into the little room.

Father Hennessey fell to coughing. He sputtered and smote his chest. When he got his breath he strode over to the fireplace and kicked the log as though it were a sensate thing, at the same time exclaiming:

"It's a purty fire ye are, a purty one, t' set a man a-coughin' his head off. Take that! And that!" and he planted two kicks in such a way that the log slipped from one of the irons and near rolled out into the room.

"Yer like th' mule that old Dinnis Fogarty ust t' own," he went on, "yer all right one minnit but there's no tellin' what ye'll do th' next." And he kicked the log upon the iron again. Presently another gust in the chimney sent an even thicker cloud of smoke into his face.

"Maggie!" he screamed. "Maggie, what th' devil's become o' ye? Maggie!"

The answering call came from somewhere overhead,—

"Comin', yer Riv'rance."

He heard the flap of slippered foot-falls on the stairs, and the next instant old Margaret Riley, his housekeeper, relict of Lawrence Riley, dead and gone these score of years, came shuffling into the room.

"Yer fire's no good," he reprimanded as she sank upon her knees beside the hearth. "An' why? Because th' chimney's no good. I told ye 'twasn't; but ye said it was. Does it look it? I ask ye that, Maggie Riley, does it look it? Now t'-morrow—"

Another cloud was swept into his face and he retreated, coughing. Over her shoulder Margaret looked back at him anxiously from smoke-red eyes.

"Did it hurt ye?" she asked solicitously.

"No, o' course not; I'm only playin', woman," he answered with bald sarcasm. "But 'twill be fixed t'-morrer; aye, even if I have t' live with th' Widdy Gibson at th' Island House durin' th' mendin'."

On her knees at the hearth old Margaret commenced to sniffle, but whether from smoke or injured feelings Father Hennessey did not seek to learn, though from his experience he might have chanced an opinion, for his housekeeper cherished a certain jealousy against the

Widow of the Island House, whose cakes and ale her Priest seemed ever to be praising in her presence. She rolled the log farther back.

"'Tis an awful storm," she murmured as though of defence.

"Storm or no storm, it's always doin' it," Father Hennessey exclaimed. "It smokes ten times worse'n old Terrance O'Toole, him as died with his pipe in his mouth. Do ye mind how we tried t' pry his teeth apart t' git it out, an' couldn't?" He sighed. "An' so we had t' leave it in," he added reminiscently. "We had t' turn him on one side t' git th' lid on. I've often thought it mebbe made him happier in Purgatory, havin' his pipe with him." Margaret heard his chuckle but did not turn.

"God rist his soul," she murmured, getting upon her feet unsteadily. "I'm thinkin' it'll smoke no more, yer Riv'rance," she added meekly.

"It hadn't better, Maggie Riley," exclaimed the Priest.

He saw a tremor pass over the frail, bent body of the woman. "Arre ye cold?" he asked kindly.

"Ah, no," she sighed deeply, "I wor thinkin'. Listen t' th' wind. 'Twas such a night as Lawrence was lost an' never came home ag'in, leavin' me a poor, lone widdy." Her breath caught in her throat and she lifted a corner of her checked apron to her small, smoke-red-dened eyes.

"Thayre, thayre," murmured the Priest consolingly. "Go rest yersilf, woman. He's happier where he is than ever he was on th' Island. An' bring me th' whiskey."

She shuffled out of the room and he heard her pottering about in the kitchen. As he listened he made out the sound of liquor being poured from a bottle, and he smiled.

"She's consolin' herself," he muttered. "Oh, well, 'tis a cheap an' easy way," he added with a sigh.

She came back with a bottle and a glass and a pitcher of water.

The Priest lifted his eyebrows.

"I thought you was pourin' it in th' kitchen, Maggie," he observed dryly.

She moistened her thin lips.

"No, yer Riv'rance," she replied.

"Set it there," he said, indicating the table, "then go t' bed. It's late." He peered through the half light at the old square clock, that ticked loudly on its especial shelf across the room. "Bless my soul, it's ten o'clock," he exclaimed. "T' bed with ye!"

He caught his breath and his eyes opened wide. There before him stood Margaret Riley, stiff, transfixed, her face the color of dead ashes, her scrawny fingers curled into the palms of her hands.

"What's th' matter?" he cried.

"Did ye hear it?" Her whisper was rasping, ominous. She stared

at nothing, as though in a state of clairvoyance. "Did ye hear th' cry? 'Twas like a lost soul! Over th' house."

He seized her arm and shook her roughly.

"Wake up! Wake up!" he cried with temper. "Hearin' sounds that have no bein'. 'Tis only th' wind, woman, or"—with a twinkle in his eyes as her steady gaze at nothing wavered—"like as not 'Twas th' *Banshee*!"

"Oh, God have mercy!" she cried, and crossing herself three times shuffled from the room with all the speed at her command. He followed her to the door and called after her as she mounted the creaking stairs:

"Thayre, thayre, woman, have no fear. 'Tis not th' *Banshee* at all; 'tis th' house, for it's as unsteady on its pins as old Michael McCann used t' be afther a day at Charleton, God rist his soul."

And when her footsteps ceased above his head he chuckled over old Margaret's superstitions that she had cherished all through a lonely life, and that now in her age were almost her sole companions.

He went to the window and looked out, but could see nothing save a confusion of black that he knew to be the moving trees. He drew his chair close to the fire and balanced the glass of whiskey and water upon his knee, gazing at it the while contemplatively. Finally after a period of anticipation he drank the contents at a gulp, smacking his lips with satisfaction upon the last brown drop. He set the empty glass on the hearth beside him and leaning back in his deep, broad chair, clasped his hands across his stomach and closed his eyes. To the accompaniment of the weird wind, moaning dismally in the chimney and screaming in the tree-tops of the wood, he hummed, softly, an old air, a harmony of the bog lands, across the sea, that he as a lad had known and loved.

Without, the storm raged riotously. The wood, in the night, crouched and hid its face before the onslaught of the wind. The Lake, lashed to a fury, roared at the Door, and even in the black the white caps gleamed as they reared and fell like tortured ghosts.

Father Hennessey ceased humming and dozed, breathing heavily. On the narrow shelf between the crayon portrait of the Bishop and a highly colored lithograph of Our Lady, the old-fashioned clock, with a brilliant, red-breasted robin on the glass of the pendulum box, ticked harshly against the deeper voices of the night. Father Hennessey had not noted the position of the hands on the yellow dial when he seated himself before the fire, so how long he slept he could not tell, but he awakened, suddenly, with a start and little catch of his breath. On the hearth the log lay broken and smouldering, and there was a decided chill in the air of the room. The wick of the squat glass lamp on the table had burned low and the corners of the room were deep in shadow. The

Priest yawned cavernously and, thrusting out his legs until his feet were almost among the embers, stretched. A strange, weird cry sounded just then above the tempest and he held the attitude, listening. He screwed up his eyes and tilted his round white head. Again he heard the cry from the deep of the storm, a long-drawn "coo-ee;" it was like no sound of nature that he could recall. Yet again it came, nearer now, as though the creature, if such had given it, were in the road opposite the door. Father Hennessey got upon his feet and crossed to the one window. He pressed his nose against the pane and, shielding his eyes from the thin light behind with his two curved palms, peered into the night. He could discern the line of the wood across the road as it moved back and forth in the wind, a restless wall of black. In the sky a pale moon struggled with cloud breakers and shed a thin phosphorescence. The deep, sonorous roar of the Lake was audible below the high shriek of the wind, and at the window the Priest shivered as with the cold. He saw a figure, crouching, leap suddenly from the line of the wood into the road. Towards the house it came, running low, swiftly. If an animal, Father Hennessey had never beheld its like before. It was as though he were present at the birth of a woodland spirit, offspring of the night and storm. Even as he watched the figure vanished as completely as though the earth had opened there in the road and swallowed it. He waited a moment longer for it to show itself again; but it did not appear and he turned from the window. He rubbed his hands. He went to the table and poured half a glass of liquor. He was lifting the drink to his lips when the cry sounded again, and instantly, it seemed to him, the door was flung back. In the fraction of a second that was given him to see, before the light went out in the sudden gust, he beheld on his threshold the figure whose movement he had watched from the window. Then blackness that was made the denser by the glow of the embers on the hearth surrounded him. He stood rigid at the table, one fist clenched, the glass of liquor still clutched in his other hand.

"Who arre ye?"

He had meant to cry out boldly; but in his ears his voice was faint and tremulous.

"Father! Oh Father!" he heard; and the wail from the black of the still open door set his every nerve aquiver.

"Holy Mother!" he exclaimed defensively, not profanely, and crossed himself, mumbling.

He shuffled to the door and closed it, and his eyes, now adjusted to the dark, made out the figure crouching on the floor. He lighted a match and, stooping, peered. There was a quick movement, and to the amazed gaze of the wondering Priest was disclosed a white, drawn face.

"Margy!" he cried, and the burning match dropped from his

fingers. He lifted her and bore her limp body to the couch, where he laid it gently. Then he lighted the lamp and poured a glass of the liquor. Supporting her head he held the drink to her lips. He noted the fright in her eyes, felt the tremor that passed through her body as the liquor touched her tongue. He fell upon his knees beside her and taking one of her cold hands in both his chafed it gently, soothingly.

"For th' love o' th' Saints, gurrl, what are ye doin' out on such a night? Is it yer mother?"

She turned away her face with a little, low cry that was more of anguish than of pain.

"There, there," he murmured consolingly.

He asked no further questions then. He realized that before him lay a child of nature wounded sore; a child of his, in truth, to whom, in her misery, it was his God-given duty to bring comfort. Whatever her agony of heart, whatever the torture of her soul, she had come where God had sent her, to him, His emissary. She was tired; she hungered; she was athirst.

Rising, he listened. The storm had subsided. He heard no sound above his head. He moved noiselessly across the room and closed the inner door. Then he placed a chair beside the couch and, taking her hand in his, again bent over her. It may be that in the depths of her melancholy eyes he read her secret, or in that instant of communion her heart spoke out to him, for his clasp of her hand tightened momentarily and he turned away his face. When next he looked down at her her lips parted and she smiled feebly.

"You are so good—so good," she murmured.

He experienced a feeling new to him and strange. It was as though she were a child of his own, come to him for comfort in her distress; dependent upon him absolutely in her fear, clinging to him, close. Yet, even as he hungered for her confidence, he bore with her in silence, knowing, in the wealth of his experience, that she would at last seek his help to bear the load that lay so leaden on her heart.

He continued to stroke her hand for some minutes. He heard the tremor of her breath as she drew it in, and then she said, low:

"They sent me out. They sent me out, Father, in the storm—away from home."

He smothered the rage that flared up in his heart, and when he spoke it was as quietly as she had spoken. He bade her take heart, to be of good cheer, and told her that she had found a haven always open to the tempest tossed.

"But I didn't know," she whispered. "I didn't know." Then, as though calling to him, she murmured—"Brian."

A cold, steely light came into the Priest's eyes and the pressure of

his hand on hers lessened. She felt it, and divining, somehow, the thought that had flashed upon his mind, raised herself to one elbow and, clutching at his coat, exclaimed, frightened:

"Father! No! Don't blame him! He never knew. He's only just come home!"

She fell back and closed her eyes. Presently she turned her face and, looking up at him, began to speak ramblingly. At times she hurried on, at others she seemed to grope for words. She hardly noticed that the Priest had risen and was pacing back and forth between the fire and where she lay restlessly, his hands clasped behind him, his chin upon his breast. To him, there in the dim-lit, barren room, her voice and her story came as echoes of an old, old sound. The pathos of it filled his heart, and as he strode he prayed. When he looked at her she was sitting on the edge of the lounge, hunched over, rubbing her arms as though she suffered with the cold, and staring into the bed of embers on the hearth.

She fell to rocking to and fro and moaning softly.

"Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!" she sobbed, and covered her face with her hands.

He went to her and stroked her hair.

"My girl"—he began, and stopped, listening. The door was struck from without, and before he could move was flung open and Brian Dean stood there.

"You!" the Priest exclaimed.

"Aye!" the voice was clear, vibrating. Father Hennessey moved towards him. Margy, wide-eyed, trembling, sank upon her knees. The Priest and the boy stood face to face, the eyes of the man flaming, the eyes of the boy soft, glowing. Brian closed the door, and as he turned Father Hennessey spoke:

"What do you want here?" he demanded.

"I want her; I've come for her—Margy." He went to where she knelt and stooped over her, one hand upon her shrinking shoulder. The muscles of the Priest relaxed, and he felt a sudden weakness stealing over him as he stared dumbly at the two figures across the room. The firelight shone on the face of the boy, and now he saw a light in the eyes that long ago, as a youth himself, new in orders, he had loved to see in the eyes of other men, a light that betokened resolve, determination, greater in its power than winds and storms. He knew the meaning of that light in the eyes of this boy and he went to him and pressed a hand to either cheek and gazed long into the strong, young face. That instant man knew man; then heart spoke to heart, and as the eyes of the Priest fell and he moved away they heard him mutter,—

"They that walk in darkness," but they did not understand the meaning of the words.

Brian raised the girl, and when the Father turned they were standing side by side, his arm about her waist. He went to them and took a hand of each. "She's a child, boy," he said,—“a child with a child's will. Take her to your heart. I know her soul, boy; it's as clean and white as the snow. She's tired. Love her; love her as she should be loved.”

He bowed his head, and Brian, stooping before him, kissed the girl upon the violet-veined lids of her tired eyes.

"Wait," the Priest said and left the room, to return immediately with his cap and great, rough coat. Bundling himself within its capacious folds he stood at the door.

Margaret looked up at Brian wonderingly. The eyes of the boy and the Father met again.

"Come," the Priest said quietly.

Margaret shrank within the arm that held her.

"Where—it's so dark," she murmured vaguely.

"Home. Home, Margy Kergan," was the low, determined answer. "T' take ye home with him that'll protect ye; an' t' read God's law t' th' father that turned ye out. Come."

XII.

THE CALL OF EVENING

BEFORE his Priest, Kergan quailed, meek, submissive. It was as though each word the good man spoke in righteous wrath fell like the lash of a whip upon his naked heart. In her chair at the end of the table, huddled over for the warmth that was thus afforded her, his wife heard breathlessly,—

"Where is she?"

Kergan spoke brokenly and without lifting his eyes from the fire.

"She's where you sent her; in th' storm—waiting." And the holy man moved across the room and placed a hand on Kergan's bent shoulder.

"Are ye a man? What would ye do now?"

Kergan looked up then and his eyes met the eyes of the Priest, that held them as in a vice. From her chair the woman stared at them fearfully.

"What would ye do?" the Father asked again.

"Where is she—tell me?"

Kergan's voice trembled so the words were barely audible, deep as was the silence in the little room.

"Go there; go there and call to her,—her ye sent out into th' storm,—if ye're a man and not a coward. Your God is watching you. Remember that." And so saying the Priest let fall his hand from the other's shoulder and drew back. An instant Kergan hesitated,

then unsteadily moved towards the door. He flung it open, and the cold that smote him full caused him to draw back as though it were a living thing that lay in wait for him. He shook himself as a great dog might and went out upon the porch. He called her name across the night, twice, and waited. Slowly he turned back into the room. His eyes met the Priest's again, and the look in them was one of deep, abiding misery.

"She's gone—she's gone!" he muttered brokenly. "She ain't there!"

He closed the door mechanically and, like a man in a dream, moved across the room to the fireplace, where a scant handful of embers still glowed. He shivered as though with the cold and looked dumbly into the face of the Priest, then into the face of his voiceless wife. It was as though he sought comfort, and finding it not he sank heavily upon the stool beside the hearth and, covering his face with his two hands, sobbed brokenly. His great shoulders shook, and something of the agony that was in his heart was the Priest's to know.

A footfall so light as barely to be heard fell on the porch without; then the latch clicked and the door opened noiselessly. The mother's face was hidden between her arms outstretched upon the table and only the Priest saw. The door swung farther back and Margy stood there. The shawl had slipped down and her face showed wan and pale in the yellow light. Her eyes glowed like the coals on the hearth. No sign passed between her and the Priest, but her eyes were held to his. Reaching out one arm she closed the door. She tottered and would have fallen, but supported herself against the wall. Her face she uplifted and closed her eyes.

Not till then did the Priest speak, and his voice was low.

"There, man, is your child," he said.

The woman sat up and a scream died on her lips. Kergan stared at the Priest dumbly.

"Father, you called me and I heard you and came." Margy's voice was weak and low, but Kergan heard and wheeled suddenly. For an instant he stared at the figure by the door, then a cry burst from him,—

"Margy! Margy!"

"Father!"

His arms were held out to her and she went to him. She hid her face against his breast, and he, muttering incoherently, clasped her closer to him.

Father Hennessey went out of that house of forgiveness then, his great heart light in his breast, a prayer upon his lips. At the edge of the clearing Brian was waiting. Now together the boy and Priest entered the wood and their figures became one with the darkness there.

Mrs. Gibson was experiencing a return of her own long-lost girlhood. As for Father Hennessey, he was never more radiant. His was the satisfaction that comes to a man after a work well done. Even Captain Spriggs partook somewhat of the cheerfulness of the moment, and was observed by Mrs. Gibson to wear a smile, albeit he examined his huge silver watch almost every five minutes.

In the sitting-room of the Island House the Priest waited. The kitchen was good enough for Captain Spriggs, for there was a roaring fire in the great stove and the blood in the little man's spare body was none too much.

"Th' Cap'n's as pleased as though they wor his own children," Mrs. Gibson said.

"Ah, oh," mouthed his Reverence, in the old familiar way, and sniffed suspiciously.

"Missus Gibson," he said, leaning forward until the lamp's light fell upon his face, "is it somethin' burnin' that I smell?"

"Saints preserve us! Th' cake!" And the mistress of the Island House flew back to the kitchen.

"Why didn't ye tell me th' weddin'-cake was burnin' up?" she exclaimed, stooping at the oven door.

"I thought I smelt it," Captain Spriggs replied, and looked at his watch again.

At the end of the wharf, clean-cut in the pale moonlight, lay the Jane, smoke rising feebly from her black stack. Her breathing was like that of a child asleep—a great water baby.

When at last they came Mrs. Gibson received them at the door. They had gone back to Kergan's house after the wedding, hence Captain Spriggs's uneasiness.

Brian carried a big valise and Margy a box, and behind them were her father and her mother and Brian's brother, a tall, stoop-shouldered man with a huge beard hiding his otherwise youthful face. The Priest came into the kitchen beaming.

"God bless ye!" he exclaimed. "Look at her, Missus Gibson, look at her! Was she ever prettier," and he raised Margy's blushing face. Their eyes met.

"Well, ye ready?" asked Captain Spriggs uneasily.

"Now remember what I tol' ye both," Father Hennessey said.

Brian laughed. "We will," he answered.

"Ye'll be back in th' spring, won't ye, gurr!" Kergan inquired, an unusual huskiness in his throat. His wife, standing beside him, her hands clasped in front of her, dared not trust her voice.

Captain Spriggs stamped across the room.

"Well, come on," he said testily, "we're a-losin' time."

They all filed out, then, into the night. High in the sky the white

moon floated like a phosphorescent cracker. At the narrow gangway Margy kissed her mother, then her father, and for a little instant he held her close in his arms.

"Hurry up," Captain Spriggs called from the low bridge of the little steamer, as once before under other circumstances he had called to these same two. Brian shook hands with his brother awkwardly and Mrs. Gibson planted a noisy kiss on Margy's cheek. The Priest came forward then, and taking one of the girl's hands in his lifted his other, and the little group upon the dock bowed their heads.

"God bless and protect ye always an' forever," he murmured. Then with a quick return of his old-time geniality he exclaimed, "I'll kiss th' bride."

"Ain't ye ever goin' t' git through?" shouted Captain Spriggs testily.

"Now," Brian called back, and they went aboard. The lines were cast off, and with many little spasmodic chuggs the steamer moved away from the dock.

They stood at the stern rail, one of her hands in his, and watched the lights of the Island that shone across to them like many little eyes. The moonlight made a shimmering, shivering pathway on the water.

"That brightest light's in Missus Gibson's kitchen," Brian said.

"Yes," Margy answered.

And, as they watched, the lights twinkled smaller and smaller, until at last they were no more. Then Brian said,—

"Come around on the other side and see the moon on the water."

As he moved away she fumbled at the bosom of her dress. Opening her hand she looked down. The moonlight glinted on the red stone of the ring that was like a drop of blood in her hand. She stopped beside him. He was gazing off down the Lake absently. She ran her hand along the rail and spread her fingers. The ring slipped and fell, and ere it struck the water she saw a quick glint of the moonlight on the stone again. At her sigh Brian turned to her.

"Are you cold, Margy?" he asked.

"No."

He slipped his arm about her waist.

There was a strange, sickly cast to the southern sky, as though below glittered many lights the reflection of which shone weakly against the purple dome.

"Is that Chicago—down there?" she asked.

He laughed aloud and drew her closer.

"No," he said, "that's not Chicago. It's farther than that—a long way farther."



EVERYMAN VISITED BY DEATH

OLD ENGLISH SACRED DRAMA

By Professor Felix E. Schelling

University of Pennsylvania



THE beautiful performance in many American cities last year of "Everyman," an old morality play, has called to popular attention a species of drama long known to students of literature, but obsolete to the stage, until this revival, for nearly five hundred years. It is now little more than a century since the novel became a power in English letters; and which of us can tell if this, our favorite form of literature, is to endure for half the life of the old English sacred drama? Certain it is that for more than three hundred years theatrical representations of Biblical story or of allegorical legend held the public attention and esteem of our ancestors in England beyond all other forms of literature, written, sung, or staged. From a part of public worship which their embryonic beginnings constituted, the former variety of plays spread into the streets, were secularized into sumptuous spectacles, and elaborated to monstrous proportions. No religious, civic, or political function was complete without them, and they formed at their height one of the most interesting as they were one of the most striking features of mediæval life.

It is of some of the main characteristics of the old sacred drama in England that the following paragraphs will treat, in a brief attempt to explain their development, to make clear some features of their picturesqueness and their power as the expression of their time.



Religion and the theatre are things so habitually separated by the habits of modern thought that it is somewhat difficult for us to conceive of them both as at one time indissolubly united. And yet the drama of modern Europe, like that of ancient Greece, took its rise in religious ceremony. The church was the first theatre, and monks and

the younger clergy were the earliest actors as well as the earliest writers, projectors, and managers of plays. The drama has been described as "imitated human action," by which is meant the necessity that a play adhere to life itself in its movement and activity. The drama has also been somewhat technically defined as "an epic proceeding by lyric parts," all of which means no more than that a play is a story told by means of the successive feelings and emotions of the characters involved. Now, a story told by means of action and the emotion involved comprehends, first, the telling, which is narrative, or epic, and, secondly, the expression of emotion in poetry or song, which is lyric. Besides this, we have gesture, facial change, and pantomime, which is action; and the use of language in dialogue and monologue. Each and all of these elements of the drama have been found by those who have searched for them in the early services of the Christian Church. Thus the epic or narrative element is to be found in the reading of the Scriptures, the epistle and the gospel, to the congregation; the lyrical or song element is contained in the hymns, anthems, and other music which formed an important and interesting part of the Christian service from the earliest times. The congregation in certain parts of the service was expected to join in responses, and the element of dialogue was accordingly introduced. Two other elements remain, that of action or of pantomime, to be found in the symbolical gestures, the bows and kneelings of the officiating priests; and processions in which banners, pictures, and images representing scenes from the life of Christ or those of the saints were solemnly borne through the church.

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The earliest scrap of anything like an acted scene that has come down to us in England is a brief transcript of the dialogue between the angel at the sepulchre of Christ and the two Marys. This was taken almost word for word from the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible, in our English Bible the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark. It is still preserved in an old manuscript in Winchester Cathedral, and dates from the end of the tenth century, long before William and his Normans had come over to England to disturb Anglo-Saxon rule. We can imagine in this case a rude representation of a cave beneath one of the low arches of the church, beside the entrance to which lay a great stone apparently just rolled away. Three of the younger clergy, or mere choristers, approach the opening dressed in long garments betokening womanhood, and meet another, arrayed in white, bearing wings and carrying a sword in his hand. And he asks, "Whom seek ye?" They reply, "Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified." And the angel tells them, "He is risen, He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him." And sadness and mourning is turned to

rejoicing and hymns of praise for the resurrection of the Lord. The congregation which witnessed these simple illustrations of Scripture was made up of fair-haired Saxon women and their husbands and brothers, the hardy stock that fought against Briton, Dane, and Northman, by sea and on land, for generations, the stock that reaches its highest development in that splendid model of English manhood, physical, intellectual, and moral, the hero-king, Alfred; and that has transmitted to the English and to the American of to-day many of the best qualities of mind and heart that are theirs.

Historians of the Church relate that the centuries between 1050 and 1250 were times of reviving faith and increased interest in religion. These centuries are also those in which the sacred drama took its rise and came to be in time one of the most flourishing forms of literature. We must remember that in these centuries there was but one Church in Western Europe, and the clergy, who were for the most part devout and honest, were eager to reach all men and present to them as vividly as possible that most beautiful and touching of stories, the life of Christ. Except the clergy, few men of the Middle Ages found time to learn



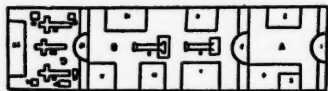
A MEDIEVAL TOWN

to read and write. William the Conqueror is said never to have compassed the mystery of alphabetic letters to a sufficient degree to affix his own name to documents of state. And whether this be a Saxon calumny or not, it illustrates the illiterate, yet not uneducated, condition of a congregation of these early centuries. But the men who met at Hastings were by no means children and they could be taught by scenes that appealed to their experience in life and represented to them the story of the past translated into the terms of the present which they knew. It was this that led to the remarkable development of the religious drama as a means to teach Bible history and to inculcate the doctrines of the Christian faith. And what a dramatic motive this was in view of the fervent and sensuous theology of the day! What motive could be more tragically effective than that in which the Son of God was offered up a present sacrifice for the sins of the world? To the

devout beholder the simplest scene of the old sacred drama must thus have had a power to move and a significance of the most awful import, as every event in the life of the Saviour and every prophecy of His coming suggested that marvellous sacrifice by which He died that men might live.

The earliest dramatic scenes thus formed about the vital mysteries of the Christian faith, the redemption of man and the birth of Christ. The Christmas play and the Easter or Resurrection play were the earliest regular dramas of the sacred type. In time other scenes came to be added to the latter representing the events of the Last Supper, the betrayal by Judas, Peter's denial, the trial, and the passion. We reproduce here a scene of the passion as represented in a miracle play of much later times. The scene is typical of the very heart and soul of the miracle play during the entire period of its popularity. The Christmas play was less tragic in motive, but none the less fit for representation. About the central scene of Mary and the Christ Child in the manger gradually developed the earlier events of the watching of the shepherds and the coming and adoration of the Magi, and the promises of the Old Testament as to the coming of Christ. The later childhood of the Saviour too became a theme for these plays and we have scenes representing the Slaughter of the Innocents, the Flight into Egypt, the Disputation in the Temple, and the Driving Out of the Money-lenders. This growth once begun, before long other points of sacred history were recognized by a diligent clergy as capable of dramatic amplification, and what had started as a part of ceremonial gradually developed into genuine drama.

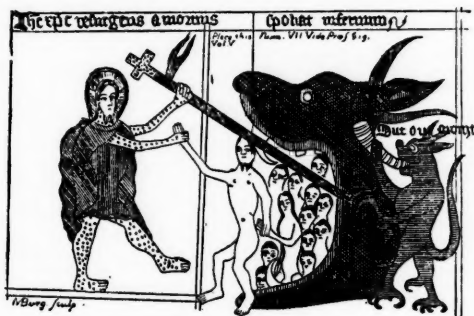
The liturgical plays, as these earliest dramas on the life of Christ are called, were acted by monks and choristers on rude stagings, open on



DISTRIBUTION OF STAGES IN A CHURCH

all sides and erected in the church. They were carried on at first wholly in Latin, the recognized language of religion and learning, and consisted of little more than a simple dialogue made up of direct question and answer. When a character rose from his seat, much as in a modern oratorio, he was imagined present. When he sat down, convention accepted this act as an exit. At times the stages were few, at others several platforms were crowded together in a single place, or twenty or more were scattered throughout the church building. In this accompanying plan of the distribution of such stages, which has come down to us from the fifteenth century, there are twenty-two platforms representing, among other things, the Garden of Gethsemane, Herod's and

Pilate's Palaces, the Pillar of the Scourging, the pillar on the top of which stood the cock that crew to the tragic undoing of Peter, the house of the Last Supper, and the Holy Sepulchre. Not ineffective may have been some of these old church plays, such as that acted in the Abbey of St. Martial at Limoges, about the middle of the twelfth century. In it the wise and foolish virgins range on either side of the entry to the choir, the angel, Gabriel, bidding them from the lectuary await the coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom. The foolish virgins travel in vain the length of the nave to purchase oil of the merchants sitting there in their stalls and return despairing to find the doors shut against them and to hear a Voice from behind the screen declaring, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." In the end black figures, dreadful to behold, dart from the shadows and bear off the unfortunate sluggards, denied and desperate, to everlasting torment. Even more effective must have been the play, acted in England and called "The Harrowing of Hell," in which, according to a beautiful old apoc-



THE HARROWING OF HELL

ryphal legend of the Gospel of Nicodemus, the august and luminous figure of the Saviour is represented as descending to the dismal place of eternal punishment and sorrow, and withstanding with mild steadfastness the onset of the demon hordes of darkness in order to set free from clanking chains and the tyranny of devils the souls of the just who, having died before the coming of Christ, could not have known Him, and are therefore to be saved only by the power of His grace.

The more elaborate and later religious drama was introduced into England by the Norman clergy that followed in the wake of William's victorious arms. In a well-known passage of the old chronicler, William FitzStephen, there is mention of the performance in London of representations of miracles performed by saintly confessors or plays of the passion in which is made manifest the constancy of martyrs. These

were in the reign of King Henry II., and before his famous son, Richard Lion Heart, went on his brilliant and futile crusade to the Holy Land. Here is a picture of the martyrdom of St. Apollodora, as represented in a saint's play in France. This unfortunate young woman suffered,



ST. APOLLODORA

among other things, the indignity of having all her teeth pulled out, and became from this, her peculiar experience in this kind of human torture, the saint appropriately invoked by those afflicted with the toothache. In the picture the surrounding platforms and pageants seem occupied by the auditors as well as by the angels and demons who are taking part in the play. This sort of play, together with a host of more or less secular farces, interludes, and moralities, became very popular in France and must have flourished to some extent in England. From the first the English seem to have preferred the miracle play—that is, a play founded more or less strictly on the Bible itself, as distinguished from the plays derived from the legends of the saints and martyrs, like unhappy St. Apollodora.

The wide diffusion of miracle plays over England may be judged from the fact that no less than one hundred and twenty-seven places are recorded as the scenes of these performances. There is record of many performances in London. Some lasted several days and were witnessed by royalty in the presence of vast concourses of people. But not only in London and in the great sees of Canterbury, York, and Winchester were miracle plays held in high esteem and popularity, but at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and in many lesser places. The vogue of these plays even extended beyond the confines of England and the geographical boundaries of the English tongue. In Scotland plays were acted at Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and elsewhere. In Dublin

too the miracle play found a welcome, and in Cornwall the sturdy Welsh showed their independence and national spirit by performance of miracle plays in Cornish. Several distinctive traits distinguish the miracle play as acted in England from similar performances abroad. The most notable was the preference for Bible story already mentioned. Another was the tendency to link scene to scene until at length a complete cycle of plays was produced beginning with Creation and extending to the Day of Judgment. The scaffold or platform on which the play was acted was called the pageant. In England the pageant was often placed on wheels and drawn from group to group of spectators. The English wagon, or wain, of the period was ordinarily a small thing, but upon occasion it could become no degenerate predecessor of the Conestoga wagon. The pageant wagons of the miracle plays were often of very great size and were decorated with carving, gilding, and bunting.

The accompanying cut represents a leaf from one of some thirty manuscripts of these old plays which are yet extant. This manuscript



MS. FROM "YORK CYCLE OF MIRACLES"

dates from about 1430 and appears to have been undertaken at the expense of the corporation of York as a complete record of the Corpus Christi Miracle Plays, acted in that town all but continuously for a period of more than two hundred years. As to this particular leaf, the heading: "The Wefferes," or Weavers, refers to the particular guild which acted this play. The interpolated music is a feature of much interest. Unhappily for our natural curiosity, the actual sound and

nature of these hymns and tunes of our early English forefathers is now a matter quite beyond the reach of research.

Of the four complete cycles of the old sacred drama that have come down to us the York plays are the most typical, and of these we know the most. An amusing sense of fitness seems at times to have governed the distribution of scenes among the various trades' guilds to whom the acting of these plays was entrusted. The "goldbeters" and "mone-makers," as the goldsmiths were then called, brought the precious gifts of the three kings to the Christ Child; the vintners presided over the miracle of the water turned to wine; the fishers acted the flood; and their pageant was preceded by that of the carpenters, who realistically built the ark on the stage. Why the merchant tailors were assigned the creation of man with the representation of our first parents in that happy state in which they can scarcely be surmised to have needed the services of tailors is a subtlety which must be left to the imagination of the reader.

The trades' guilds, the members of which commonly, but by no means universally, acted these old religious dramas, play a peculiar

Genz à metlier.



MEDIEVAL CRAFTSMEN, THE ACTORS IN MIRACLE PLAYS

and interesting part in mediæval town life. Not only did they provide for the proper training of apprentices and the protection and regulation of trade, but it was from the officers of the guilds that the mayor, the sheriffs, and the aldermen of the town were chosen. The custom of linking plays on kindred subjects was fostered by the ambition of the guilds to commemorate a festival so august with becoming dignity; and a natural rivalry sprang up among those taking part as to which should present the finest pageant and the one most properly acted and fittingly staged. At its height the celebration of the festival of Corpus Christi by the trades' guilds of the town of York involved more than sixty pageants sumptuously decorated and drawn on wheels,

accompanied by outriders and trumpeters, footmen and banners, detailing by dialogue the complete Bible story from the Creation and the



STAGE OF A MIRACLE PLAY

Fall of Man to the Coming of Christ, and from the Crucifixion to the Day of Last Judgment, depicting the well-known Biblical characters, but abstract personages as well, portraying and satirizing contemporary



PERFORMANCE OF A MIRACLE PLAY

life, performed during several days by lay actors with help of elaborate properties and costuming, the delight, the marvel, and the scandal of the market-place.

In reading the remains of these old plays as they have come down to us several things strike us at once. The language is very uncouth and, until we have made a study of it, at times difficult to understand. Except for Chaucer, there was practically no literature in mediæval England that could stand the test of appraisal at its intrinsic worth. And, besides, the greater part of the miracle plays are written in dialects which were not destined to become part of that literary tongue in which the great works of our language have since been written. Again,

the metres of the miracle cycle are a bewildering chaos of ingenuity and elaboration in which the old English fondness for "running the letter," as alliteration was called, vies with the middle English delight in the jingle or rhyme, and with a liberality as to the number and nature of the syllables employed to produce an effect at times disheartening. It was not until the decade in which Shakespeare was born that anyone thought of using blank verse in the drama; and it was not until Shakespeare was at an age to rob orchards and poach on preserves of deer—whether he actually did so or not—that Kyd and Marlowe succeeded in making blank verse the generally accepted metre for serious drama.

But more striking than these matters of form are the amusing anachronisms which we happen on from time to time in these old plays.



ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN OUT OF EDEN

It is well known that the calling on the saints and even on Deity, often on very unnecessary occasions, was one of the current customs of the speech of the day; though we sometimes forget that such an expression as our own "dear me" is only an attenuated form of *deus meus*. But the inappropriateness of some of these mediæval oaths is surprising and unexpected. Thus Herod and Pontius Pilate rage as the heathen will, and swear customarily by Mahomet; whilst the shepherds, as they await the sign on the hillside, invoke St. Nicholas as to the truthfulness of their assertion about their flocks and the weather. Isaac, in a scene beautiful in its simple and homely pathos, adjures his father, Abraham, by the "blessed Trinity" to spare his mother's tears and not to tell her of her son's untimely death. There is a free use of interlarded Latin by Adam in the Garden of Eden, a fluency which is shared by Eve and by the Serpent, of whom alone have we any reason to expect any such preternatural learning. There could have been not the slightest attempt to realize costume, manners, or conditions other than those of the age; for it seems to have occurred to no one that people had ever dressed differently from the fashion of mediæval England. The nativity was ordinarily represented amid the rigors of a Yorkshire winter. St. Paul before his conversion is arrayed in the com-

plete armor of an adventurous knight, riding aimlessly about to redress wrongs; after the miracle near Damascus he appears as an English bishop in full canonicals. Certain definite types of character were evolved in this childlike contemporaneousness. A becoming awe and



THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

reverence for the noble figures of Christ and His disciples, for the Marys and the family of Jesus, precluded, for the most part, any wide departure from the characterization of Scripture. None the less we have Joseph represented as an elderly and somewhat querulous man, diffident,



THE CREATION OF EVE

as a Yorkshire carpenter would be, to speak to those in authority. With many of the figures of the Old Testament we have the frankest comedy. There is a scene of rude clown's play between Cain, conceived in the figure of a Yorkshire ploughman, and his ploughboy, of whose country, whether it be like that of Cain's wife's, the land of Nod, or some other country, it would be difficult to tell. In the wife of Noah we have a

vivid and merrily conceived portrait of the contemporary village scold, for whom the ducking-stool of later times was fittingly and appropriately reserved. Not only do Noah and his unmanageable spouse indulge in unseemly, if amusing, recriminations on the wisdom of building the ark, and on the repugnant natures in general of man and wife, but, in accord with a frank old English custom, the incensed husband administers wholesome chastisement, which his spouse receives in anything but a becoming spirit of submission, and, indeed, even pays him in kind and with interest. In the end the wife declares that she will not enter the ark without her gossips "everichone." And she takes her wheel and distaff and seats herself to spin on a neighboring rock, remarking that she does not believe that it is going to rain very hard anyhow. Deaf to the commands of her husband and to the entreaties of sons and daughters, she remains until the rising waters begin to wet her shoes, and then, gathering up her distaff and her skirts, she flies precipitately into the ark as it rises to float off.



Although it was reserved for Puritan Milton, out of the sympathy of his heart with rebellion, to make Lucifer the hero of "Paradise Lost," there is in the earlier miracles a certain dignity about the tempter of man in whom the lineaments of his angelic birth are at times dimly traceable despite his dreadful fall. But whether bred of the proverbial contempt that comes of familiarity or for other reasons it was not long before we witness a marked degeneracy in the devil. From an object of terror he gradually becomes the butt of ridicule, and as common a personage to the sacred drama at large as he was familiar to the decorations of mediæval churches in which, as is well known, in number and ingenious variety he vies with the figures and carvings of the saints themselves.

This childlike simplicity and unconsciousness in the old drama went one step further. As we open the "Norwich Whitson Plays" for the first time, it is something of a shock to find the first speaker described as Pater Omnipotens, who, speaking out of heaven, says:

"Ego principium, Alpha et Omega, in altissimis habito;
In the heavenly empery I am resydent."

And yet we should grievously misunderstand these excellent ancestors of ours if we should think that it occurred to the average man of his time that there was any impiety in thus introducing a visible representation of God on the common stage. These representations have the innocence and unconsciousness of childhood in them, and must in justice be so judged. Those who have seen the Passion Play as exhibited at Oberammergau tell us that, despite the adverse element of a large

concourse of foreigners, who came for the spectacle and the novelty of the thing and scarcely in any true spirit of worship, the total effect was most impressive and moving, and marvellously free from the taint of the theatre. Such must have been the prevailing effect of the old sacred drama; and when we think of the human element which some of these old scenes contain, the simple pathos of the story of the sacrifice of Abraham, the womanly sweetness and dignity of Mary, the tearful contrition and repentance of Magdalene, and the compassionate and yet majestic person of the Saviour, we forget the rudeness, the homeliness of style and childishness of conception in a genuine admiration for a true and fervid attempt to make more real, more searching, and closer to the hearts of all that most marvellous of all the stories of old time.



BY SPECIAL DELIVERY

BY DIXIE WOLCOTT

YES, at last, Bob, the summer is over,
 And won't I "come home very soon?"
 Well, it seems to me, too, like a decade
 Since I bade you good-by back in June,
 Yet you say in your yesterday's letter
 That I seem quite contented to stay,
 And you hear I'm the belle of White Sulphur,
 As my grandmother was in her day?

Well, perhaps, but believe me, dear Bobby,
 It is often the belle of the ball,
 With the crowd at her feet paying homage,
 Who is saddest, perchance, of them all;
 And 'twas only my eyes that were smiling,
 Alike at the earnest or gay,
 For my heart's been in town all the season
 With a man who could not "get away."

I've golfed, I have bowled, and I've ridden,
 I've been wined and fêted and dined,
 I've led about half the cotillons—
 'Twas charming, of course, of its kind;
 But the nicest thing comes off to-morrow
 That's happened the whole summer through,
 For I bid a farewell to the mountains .
 And come back to town and to—you.

BRINDLE-BOY

By Eleanor A. Hallowell



THE trouble began on a certain afternoon in August, when Barry Brewster, returning home from a week's absence, met on the public highway of his native town a strange red cart driven by an exceedingly pretty strange girl.

Now there was nothing astonishing about meeting a strange cart, nor yet a pretty girl, but in that strange cart, cuddled close to that pretty girl, sat Barry's best bulldog.

For the fraction of a second Barry's astonished lips quivered on the edge of an imperative whistle, but something plaintive in the girl's face quelled his impulse, and he passed on like a stranger, though the bulldog began to wriggle in his seat, and puff and sniff as one who appreciated the extreme awkwardness of his position but would fain protest his own innocence of any wrong.

Barry Brewster trudged home with a perplexed frown on his face. "If only it hadn't been my *best bulldog*," he fretted to himself. "If it had been Mikey or Trumps or even Gruff, I might have understood it, but to think of Brindle-Boy, surly, crotchety, knock-kneed, screw-tailed Brindle-Boy, 'riding out' with a lady in a red-wheeled cart, and chuckling down at me as though I were a poor relation. Ugh!"

Five minutes later, at the gateway of a Queen Anne cottage, the young man whistled sulkily to a bunch of brown on the piazza, and immediately three doughty little bulldogs came scuffling down the walk in a terrible state of excitement, but their master brushed them off impatiently and spoke to them in the stern, uncconciliatory voice that people always adopt towards the perfectly innocent. "*Where is Brindle-Boy?*" he inquired in a tone so brutally harsh that each little dog sat up and pawed the air deprecatingly, as though to whine, "Search me. Search me."

Barry pushed by them scornfully and went on to the house, where a neat Japanese man opened the door and bowed a low salaam to his master's terse greeting.

"*Where is Brindle-Boy?*" Barry insisted with a tenacity that Brindle-Boy himself could not have excelled; but the Japanese man only shook his head and smiled fatuously, with a "I no know. He go way every day same time and come back *fancy*."

"Come back *fancy*?" snapped Barry. "What in thunder does that mean?" Then he grinned at his own display of temper and strode upstairs to his room and threw himself down in a big chair, where he could puff furiously at a pipe and muse on the strange delinquency of his best bulldog.

Deep in smoke and thoughts, it was an hour before he roused himself to the chiding note of the village clock, and as he rubbed his chin, anent the wisdom of shaving, he heard a ferocious snort in the hall below, a sliding thud across the floor, a tinkle of toenails on the hard wood stairs, and then in an amazing flash of brown and *crimson* a great mass of brindled dog came hurling itself into his arms and dashed a perfect riot of slobbery kisses at his cheek.

Barry jumped to his feet, and sent poor Brindle-Boy huddling to the floor with a crimson rose jammed under one ear.

Barry surveyed the nosegay and its wearer with unbridled wrath. "You old lapdog," he hissed, "you skye-terrier, you damned *pug*! Come home *fancy*? I should think you did. Since when have you worn Jacqueminot roses in your collar?" and seizing Brindle-Boy by the scruff of the neck he lifted him high with both hands and shook him till the offending blossom fell out in tatters. Then he dropped the dog with a horrid thud, and kicked him aside, and went over to the bureau and got out his razor and tried to shave without cutting himself; while Brindle-Boy, nothing daunted, sat down with legs akimbo and watched the proceedings with amorous delight, until at last Barry, having caught in the mirror a glimpse of doggish grin, turned and threw a handful of lather straight into Brindle-Boy's yawning mouth, and, with peace thus restored, the two proceeded to scoff over the situation.

"I suppose you'd like a blue satin sash," the young man suggested pleasantly as he ran the razor down his lean cheek. "And perhaps you'd like to start an account at a dry-goods store," he continued with a bloody dig at his chin. "Will you have your fleas soap scented with rose or violet?" he mused with enticing seriousness. Then an injudicious slob of lather silenced his reflections for a moment, but Brindle-Boy sat up with snuffling expectancy, his eyes round and bright like buttons and his tough hide fairly crinkling with delight.

Barry resumed his conversation with fresh vehemence. "A bulldog like you riding out with a lady! Great Jumping Jiminies! when did you ever see *me* riding out with a lady and trotting home at tea-time with a rose stuck through my collar. *You watch me*, you old idiot, in the matter of ladies. *You take me for your model*, and to break up your fancy habits and give you a good start in the right direction, suppose we tie you to a ring in the barn floor for a few days? How will you like that, you bloomin' beast?"

Brindle-Boy

But the "bloomin' beast" only sat and chuckled a husky "Ouf, ouf!" and twitched a muscle in his back that used to connect with the tip of quite a long tail.

Brindle-Boy did not seem to fear the morrow, nor did he need to fear it, as things turned out, for when the morrow came his master was stricken down with a fever, and it was days and weeks before anyone cared whether Brindle-Boy came or went, whether roses or Easter lilies bloomed in his collar, whether he snoozed like a lapdog in a velvet chair or worried the other bulldogs over the straw in the barn.

But after weeks of anxious vigilance and tedious discipline there came a day in late September when the tension snapped, and Brindle-Boy, returning home from his jaunt a little earlier than usual, stole unmolested past the guard of nurse and Japanese man. Cautiously and cannily, with his soft pedals on, he crept up the stairs and along the hall to his master's room, where he tiptoed over to the bed and gave a soft experimental sniff. When no one answered him he climbed up stealthily like a panther and dragged himself along the coverlid on his belly till he could run his cold nose into the hollow of his master's neck.

Startled by the clammy touch, Barry opened his dull eyes and screamed with horror. Then Brindle-Boy gave a sharp, glad bark and began to snuggle furiously. But Barry clutched weakly at a fold of brindled flesh and burst out crying like a girl. "Oh Brindle-Boy," he gasped, "you smell like a *rose*."

During the subsequent days of lazy convalescence Barry sat by his bedroom window and watched the world go by. There seemed to be no very great rush. Now and then a leaf fluttered down or a market wagon rattled off, but the young man did not gain any particular stimulant from such incidents.

The most definite happening of the day was Brindle-Boy's mysterious coming and going. Just as soon as the afternoon clock struck three Brindle-Boy began to sniff and make excuses. Previous to that he might have been sleeping like a bronze paper-weight, or sucking the luscious colors out of the corner of an oriental rug, or even doing impromptu tricks to amuse the invalid, but the second the clock struck three he would grow uneasy and run to the window, and pout and fawn and courtesy round in a *dressy* sort of way that almost broke his master's heart. Yet there was no use keeping him by force or by closed doors, for a dog that doesn't want to stay with you is about as poor company as the Lord ever made.

So Brindle-Boy went out every afternoon and was lost to sight in the foliage round the gateway, and every night at teatime he came tripping home with a huge and flaunting posy stuck in his collar.

Barry had borne this mysterious desertion for about two weeks, when

he discovered one day that the fast-thinning foliage no longer covered Brindle-Boy's retreat. With astonishment he beheld the brindled black-guard trot down the walk, pause in the gateway to sniff a second up and down the road after possible cats, and then tiptoe across the mud, and whisk up the driveway of the opposite house.

"Well, I'll be *darned!*" quoth Barry. "So that's the attraction,—one of my new neighbors,—and as he meditated fretfully on his discovery, he heard a rumble and a creak as down that opposite driveway came the red cart, the pretty girl, and Brindle-Boy cuddled close to a scarlet jacket.

Barry groaned aloud. "Is that the way the beast takes me for a model? I'd like to know *when* he ever saw *me* riding out with a lady, or lolling over her shoulder like a sick feather boa. Ugh! And nervy? Well, it's the nerviest thing I ever saw in my life to steal a dog right out of his own front yard and before his master's eyes. I suppose that girl would claim that she didn't know the dog had a master—it's so customary for bulldogs to rent Queen Anne cottages in the suburbs and keep Japanese men to open and shut the doors for them. *Ugh!!*

"Kimno, come here!" he shouted in a voice that brought the Japanese man sliding in like an automaton on wheels. "Who lives in the house opposite?" he demanded stentoriously.

The Japanese man grinned with relief. "O-o-h!" he sighed; "one old dame, one missy, one horse-cart with red whirligigs."

"*Isn't there any man to teach them better?*" ejaculated Barry with intense ferocity.

"What say?" questioned the little Japanese in bland perplexity.

"I said," growled Barry, "that they *steal* my dog."

"Oh, n-o," protested Kimno with gentle fervor. "Missy no steal your dog—she just take him."

Barry threw back his head and roared with disgust. "How long has this taking habit been going on?" he inquired.

The Japanese man bungled over the words, but caught the general drift of the remark.

"How long?" he queried gently. "It happen one day when you gone off for whole week. I work in kitchen at window. I see one white silk puss-cat come creepy, creepy in the yard. I no see his collar, his neck so fluff, but I hear one little bell go tinkle, tinkle, tinkle. Pret-soon a missy come round the corner all creepy, creepy too, with chop-bone in her hand, and she call so soft, 'Come, puss-cat, puss-cat, puss-cat.' But puss-cat he no care for dead chop when he can catchy grasshoppers.

"Then quick before I think, whoop! scat! the dogs go scooty 'cross the grass, and puss-cat he all stick out and spit, and then he shin up tree like hell. And Brindle-Boy, he rush at missy all mad, and grab

her skirts and stockings and pull-tug, pull-tug, and growl and bite like he eat her all up."

"The beast!" exclaimed Barry. "What did you do?"

The little Japanese man drew himself up with pride till he almost reached his master's shoulder. "I grab big broom and rush out to save."

"What did she do?" Barry persisted, kicking angrily at the chair. "Did she scream bloody murder?"

The little man's pompous bravery seemed to suddenly wither away. "What she do? She just put back her head and laugh all teeth and cry out, 'Isn't he just too sweet for anything?' all silly like that, and as I lift up broom to club that dog's head she throw him lamb-chop quick, and he stop bitey her feet, and she sit right down on grass and cry, cry, all whitey. And Brindle-Boy when he finish that chop he come lick her hands so nice, and missy she kind of tuck up her cry and run home. But white silk puss-cat he no come down out of that tree for two days, and bulldogs they go round so sad and cough up white fluff fur all time."

"Did they eat her cat?" Barry inquired as a matter of natural politeness. He hated cats.

The Japanese man resumed his fatuous smile. "They try hard," he acknowledged. "They bitey deep and often, but they no hurt white silk puss-cat, he live so far inside."

Barry grinned a good deal over the cat episode as he moped alone in his room that afternoon, but when Brindle-Boy came trotting home at teatime with a whopping big chrysanthemum twisted in his collar the young man's wrath revived, and when next Mr. Brindle-Boy went off to drive he carried a very unæsthetic note tied to his neck, which said, "Please do not put posies in my dog's collar. It makes me perfectly sick."

It is marvellous how a dangerous illness will knock the conventionalities out of a man.

Brindle-Boy came home that night with no posy in his collar, and, what is more, with no note either. He was certainly just the same Brindle-Boy, but he had a curious undressed, naked look that baffled his master.

"Great Scott!" mused Barry, "it's an awfully simple and flat thing to get your own way. Now, I trust, the posy episode is quite over. And there will be no more giggly girls or 'white silk puss-cats' adrift in my garden."

"You're a good Brindle-Boy," he acknowledged, reaching out a weak hand towards the dog's thick neck. "You're a good Brindle-Boy, and I hope you'll always drive girls and cats out of my garden. It's the right spirit, Beastie. It's doing *exactly* what I'd do. But,

just in passing, I'd like to remind you that *I* never bit a lady's ankles in my life."

So the posy episode was closed for the night, but opened itself with astonishing freshness the next afternoon, when Brindle-Boy returned lashed to a large blue envelope.

Barry took the letter very gingerly in his hands. He hated blue stationery almost as much as he hated cats, and the handwriting justified his worst fears—it was a sort of cross between Gothic architecture and a picket fence, and the capital letters fairly pricked his fever-weakened eyes. Fortunately, however, the message was quite brief. It only said:

"I think you are a very disagreeable old gentleman. It doesn't hurt you at all to have me put posies in your dog's collar, and, besides, *I like to do it*. I suppose, though, I'll have to stop if you insist. I asked my mother about it, and she said it was very impudent of me to take your dog driving, anyway. I don't think it's impudent, but if it is, mother apologizes and presents her compliments. *P-l-e-a-s-e* don't stop my driving fun, for I don't know a soul here, and *I have* to be out-doors, and *I love* Brindle-Boy."

"Well, she's a saucy youngster," thought Barry, "to conclude that I'm on the edge of the grave just because I object to my best bulldog going round looking like a darn fool. I guess I'll spring a surprise on her and have some fun. It's a long time since I've been 'real divilish.'" Whereupon he called for paper and ink and inscribed in an ostentatiously round, clear hand the following answer:

"You mustn't love Brindle-Boy, he's only a dog, and, besides, he has fleas."

"There," he congratulated himself, "I call that a rare touch of aged gallantry and common-sense." He dipped his pen deeper and continued:

"As to your taking my dog to drive or trimming him up like a French chop, I should be glad to discuss the matter with you on my piazza to-morrow morning at ten o'clock if the weather is warm and pleasant enough to permit a gentleman of my infirmities to be out."

Then he dispatched Kimno very formally with the epistle—and cursed himself half the night for his kiddishness in ever having participated in such a correspondence. "Humph," he thought, "we'll be trading postage-stamps and paper-dolls next."

Nevertheless, when the next morning came he made Kimno rout him

out of bed at the unearthly hour of nine o'clock, and shave him and dress him and overcoat him, and settle him finally in rugs and steamer chair at the sunniest, warmest corner of the piazza.

It seemed very good to be out again, so joyously and, indeed, exhaustingly good that he felt rather relieved when the village clock struck ten and no girl had appeared. But just as he drew a long sigh of tired content and shut his eyes from the stinging glare of a sunbeam, Brindle-Boy gave a great snort and a jump, and started down the driveway, and presently a yellow-haired, red-coated girl appeared with Brindle-Boy snapping disconcertingly at her ankles.

When the girl reached the steps and saw Barry she hesitated a second, and then came boldly up.

"I want to see Mr. Brewster," she announced abruptly.

"I am Mr. Brewster," Barry replied with an almost insolent dignity. He smiled, but his face was so thin that his smile was not pleasant.

Something in his manner and his looks nettled the girl. "I mean old Mr. Brewster," she persisted. "I wish to see *old* Mr. Brewster." She stamped her foot. "I *insist* on seeing old Mr. Brewster!"

"You can't," said Barry dryly; "he's been dead too long."

The girl's mouth twitched uneasily and her forehead puckered, but Barry's lips spread frankly in a grin. "I'm the *only* Mr. Brewster," he explained with ill-concealed delight.

The girl sank down into a little scarlet heap on the top step and began to cough, not loudly, but with a certain racking insistence. "O-h!" mused Barry, "so she's one of the horde that comes to this part of the country to grow lungs. Poor little beggar!" He almost wished that he had not trapped her into this teasing scheme. She was younger than he had expected, hardly twenty, perhaps—a good ten years behind him, anyway, and her face at close range was thinner and more delicate than he had supposed. He tried his best to think of something reassuring to say, but the girl was the first to find her tongue.

"I've made a horrid mistake," she acknowledged with rather grim gayety. "And I'd like to run home pretty fast if you'll hold Brindle-Boy. But it's awfully hard to retreat with dignity when he snaps at your ankles. It gives you a terrible sit-down feeling."

"I should think it might," Barry conceded; "I should think it might give you a *very* sit-down feeling. And, indeed, I'd like to hold him for you, but—I'm not strong enough. You'll have to wait and talk to me for quite a while—till my man comes." His freshly shaven lips shut awkwardly on the bland lie, and the girl looked up at him and turned away, and then looked back again and laughed.

"I do believe you're lonesome too," she suggested.

"Too?" quizzed Barry.

"Yes," said the girl; "I'm *awfully* lonesome, and if you'd like me to I'll come over every morning for a little while and sit on the piazza with you."

"Great Heaven!" quoth Barry, with an emphasis not strictly religious. "No, little girl, you run right home, and don't you ever come in my garden again."

The girl jumped up with a gasp, and gathered her skirts around her as though a chasm had opened. All the color went out of her face and her chin quivered piteously.

"Never come in your garden again? Why not?" she stammered.

Barry began to laugh. "Why not?" he mocked. "Because, in the first place, *I don't want you*, and, in the second place, *I don't want you*, and, in the third place, *I d-o-n-'t w-a-n-t y-o-u*. And that proves 'why not?' without any dispute."

"O-h!" said the girl, and started heavily down the steps. Then she turned and looked up at Barry searchingly and perplexedly, as a hurt puppy might look at its first tormentor.

"Yes, I *mean* it," Barry insisted, but suddenly his eyes began to twinkle.

"You see," he explained, "you've got a very bad case of *youth*, and youth is fearfully contagious, and I don't want to run any risks. The first thing I knew you'd be taking *me* to drive, and sticking rosebuds through *my* collar."

The girl broke into uncontrollable laughter, and she hunched up her shoulders and jumped from the steps. "Oh," she called back, "is *that* it? All right, I'll be over the first thing in the morning," and she turned and fled like a wild thing down the walk.

Brindle-Boy caught her just beyond the lilac-bush and sent her huddling to the ground with a thud that sounded very amusing to Barry.

"Call off your dog. Oh, *p-l-e-a-s-e* call off your dog!" came a pleading voice from behind the branches.

Barry whistled stentoriously as soon as he could get his lips puckered, and Brindle-Boy came trotting sulkily back to the piazza, and threw himself down beside his master, where he could watch a scarlet coat go flitting up the opposite road.

Then Barry took hold of Brindle-Boy's soft ear and pinched it hard. "Brindle-Boy," he said, "I'm glad we drove her out of our garden. We've simply got to be stern with a girl like that. Why, the first thing we knew she'd up and marry us. And wouldn't that be a calamity? She'd comb and brush *you* till you *curled*, and me? She'd run her wedding-ring through my nose and lead me round in a procession. *Growl*, you divil, *g-r-o-w-l!*"

Magdalena.—Even as These

But Brindle-Boy only sat and smacked his lips joyously, and thumped his knobby tail against the piazza floor. It was a very, very short tail, but it seemed to have an extraordinary long wag to it.

Many short tales, though, have long wags, and if you only succeed in getting the right tip, there's no great trouble about finishing things up to suit yourself.



MAGDALENA

BY ELSA BARKER

I HAVE seen the Master's face
 Bending down to my low place,
 Seen His eyes of boundless pity
 Proving my disgrace.

And I follow at His side,
 Though He knows all I would hide—
 All the boundless love I could not
 Smother if I tried!



EVEN AS THESE

BY ELLEN GRAY BARBOUR

A TROUBLING of the sacred pool; a breeze
 That cannot break the silence of the trees;
 The light when falls a star; even as these,
 Even as these, is Love.

A rain-gust blown athwart the August heat;
 The vanishing turmoil where two rivulets meet;
 The little sob where music is most sweet;
 Lo, Pain is even as these.

A cloud that bringeth never forth its rain;
 A child's laugh, sped whence lies a dear one slain;
 Even as these the life that knows not Pain
 Or hath forgotten Love.

THE TRAGIC TOUCH

By *Francis Howard Williams*

Author of "At the Rise of the Curtain," "Atman," etc.



THE breakfast-room, having a north light, had been fitted up as a studio. It looked out upon a pretty lawn that fell off in green gradations to a little runnel which meandered towards the river a mile away. The house was pretty because a touch of art had fallen upon its commonplace lines and angles; it had porches on two sides with trellised creepers, and a bulging gable towards the road.

When Edward Steelman, artist and dreamer, had taken unto himself a wife, twenty years his junior, he had brought her here for two very good reasons—first, because he wanted to have her to himself, and, secondly, because he was weary of the unending conventions and thought thus to escape them.

Deep in his heart also there was perhaps a half fear that the discrepancy in their ages might some day impel his wife to mental comparisons not altogether in his favor. He was only forty-five, but even at that age a man begins to grow sensitive. He couldn't forget that to Hope, with her quick perceptions and imaginative temperament, he must seem almost old, nor could he conceal from himself the feeling of resentment with which he thought of her taking an interest in the society of younger men.

So he came to Abbeyvale and bought the house with its porches and bulging gable and breakfast-room with a north light.

The light was doing him a particularly valuable service this morning, for somehow it seemed to be bringing him an inspiration long prayed for and hitherto denied. The picture on the easel was all but finished; it needed only a touch at the eyes. The casual observer scarcely could have detected such a need, but the artist was conscious of it and had long been so. For how many weary weeks had he labored only to be at last confronted with a problem which appeared beyond his power to solve!

Why he had chosen so antique a subject as Phædra he could not quite say. He was in a general way a believer in the modern both in subject and in treatment, but Phædra had appealed to him and would not be denied, so that at last he decided to lay the ghost by painting the picture. This was before his marriage; the picture had been started

The Tragic Touch

and put aside, taken up and put aside again. Now that he was settled and had fled the pressure of convention, he had once more essayed the work and was putting on the finishing strokes in his cosey studio at Abbeyvale.

The eyes were the trouble. The artist had had as his model a young woman admirably fitted to the pose she attempted; Steelman was satisfied with the attitude and the suggestion of tense and tragic desire involved in the forward bend of the body and the strained, imploring arms. In fact, he felt almost too well satisfied, believing, in common with all men of great ambitions, that only the divine discontent ever truly accomplishes. He began to fear that being pleased with himself argued a dulness of critical perception and presaged failure of attainment; yet he could not help realizing that what he had done was good, tested by the best standards of which he was able to avail himself. There was tragedy in his Phædra, there was passion; even in the lines of the mouth his model had been of the greatest service in that her face was singularly adapted to the subject. But she could do nothing for him when it came to the eyes. Even the pay of a first-class model will not command the consuming light which some men—and they the happiest—have seen, only once or twice perhaps, in a woman's eyes.

Steelman was perplexed and a bit angry. His work had faltered on the threshold of realization. Somehow this morning he began to hope; there was the quality of inspiration in the air. He looked into the face of his creation, studying those eyes, fateful and deep, yet still lacking the touch which should make them Phædra's.

Oh! if he could but once catch the gleam, the intense spark of a consuming desire, the smothered blaze of a passion born into life and waiting but the signal to leap all bounds to its goal!

For hours he labored on, attending to minor details in the hope of a sudden insight, then coming back to the eyes. The morning melted into afternoon, and still he worked and hoped.

Edward Steelman was not the first artist to paint a picture, great up to a certain point and failing at last for want of the ultimate touch which means perfection and lacking which all the rest goes for naught.

A light breeze cantered across the lawn and came idly in at the big north window, fanning Steelman's forehead gratefully and fetching a breath of clover to his nostrils; then there was a step without and Lal looked in, smiling.

"How's it going to-day, Dad?"

"Better, I hope, boy. I actually feel as if I were going to accomplish something—as if something were going to happen."

"Guess something always does happen when the time comes."

"Yes, that's philosophy. By Jove! I believe you've got more of

the coldly rational in your make-up than I have. That's because I didn't bring you up to be a poor painter with an ideal. You've got a lot to thank me for, Lal."

"I know it, Dad. But I also know I'll never amount to half as much as you. Here I've been golfing while you've been working."

"Well, for a chap who's just come of age you're doing pretty well. You seem a boy to me, you know, and I don't begrudge boys their playtime."

Lal laughed. He hitched at his belt, pulled himself into shape, and pushed back a heavy mass of brown hair which lay upon his forehead. Then he went out upon the porch and threw himself at full length upon a wicker couch, with a pile of cushions under his head. He was a splendid fellow, tall, sinewy, brown from sun and weather, and with a strong coloring of the good red blood which coursed through his veins. He was Steelman's only son, the child of his youth, whose mother had yielded up her life for him. The story was a sad one. Steelman was a mere boy when he had met Esther Mainwaring and married her against her parents' wishes. The marriage had proven happy, but Esther died within a year, leaving this boy to the care of the saddened father. Edward Steelman's mourning had been sincere, and his love for Lal had grown each year until it had become nearly the governing motive of his life. There was between the two that peculiar comradeship which can exist only between father and son, and which, as a matter of fact, does exist all too seldom. To Lal, who could have no memories of his mother, his father seemed to fill the measure of what was best in life and character. To Edward the boy was the incarnation of a love which had been very real but which time had softened into a gentle memory.

When he met Hope Worthington he realized how profound may be the passion of a man who has sounded many depths and aspired to many heights, and who, having entered upon that nondescript period known as middle life, learns for the first time the meanings and implications of youth. The precise quality of Hope's sentiments it would be difficult to state, but Steelman wooed her with an impetuosity which carried her away. That she idealized him into something other than he was may be admitted; that she found in him a very true and noble man is equally the fact. Certainly she believed that she loved him, though it is problematical whether the comparative loneliness of Abbeyvale was conducive to a development of the feeling. She made a careful and attentive housewife, going about her daily duties with a certain demureness which was positively entrancing in the eyes of her husband, and in the evenings singing such charming little chansons and bits of metrical sentiment that even Lal found a pleasure in standing by the piano and turning her leaves.

This afternoon Hope had gone out immediately after luncheon and was to stop on her way home at the village to get the mail. Her dog-cart with its red parasol, and her jaunty cob with his bang tail, made a picturesque combination, always providing that Hope drove herself. In the eyes of Abbeyvale Hope was the essential element in the group, and she always gathered a harvest of smiles at the post-office.

Now the sun was hot and the snow-like masses of white cloud in the West suggested a gust towards evening.

Edward Steelman worked away at his easel. The north light wouldn't hold much longer and he was eager to catch the fleeting idea which struggled towards being, yet would not quite assume tangible form. Silently he painted as the sun got nearer the west.

Lal had fallen asleep on the wicker couch on the porch, one hand under his cheek and the other drooping carelessly across the back of the couch. His clean-cut limbs were crossed in a posture of perfect repose, and the glow of health tinged his cheeks and melted into the shadows of his long lashes. It is only during a period of a few years in the life of man or woman that Nature seems at her perfect stage. Lal had barely entered upon that period, but he was developed in all ways beyond his years, and as he lay on the couch he was the embodiment of an ideal physical manhood.

Once Edward had spoken to him and, receiving no answer, had stepped out upon the porch and gazed upon him with a look wherein the artist's deep admiration and the father's deeper love were strangely mingled.

"How splendid the lad is!" he muttered; and then he went back to the studio and struggled with the eyes of his Phædra. They baffled him still. He needed but a touch, yet that touch he could not give. The wild light of a passion—half morbid, perhaps ultra-human. He knew what he wanted. It seemed to him that he could *think* the look but could not *see* it in his mind's eye, as he must do ere he could imprison it upon the canvas.

"What would I not give for a model who should show me that look!" he said half despairingly. "There must be Phædras in the world to-day. Why cannot I find one? I know in my soul that I've done a great thing, wanting only this—this— Bah! I must lack the final gift. I guess I'm not an artist after all."

Steelman spoke to himself savagely, as a man threatening another with a righteous wrath; and as he did so there came the grating of wheels upon the gravel drive, and he heard Hope alighting from the cart and handing the reins to the groom. His face brightened; it was always so good to see Hope. There was about her the atmosphere of a womanhood half afraid and half imperious which charmed him. He heard her footfall upon the porch step; he fancied he heard the

rustle of her skirts; then there was a sudden pause; she had stopped.

Steelman listened intently and looked through the doorway, expecting to see the trim figure darken it. She did not come. It was very silent but for the chattering of some quarrelsome sparrows on the lawn. He waited a few seconds, then laid down his brushes and walked to the door, his step muffled by the heavy rug, and his position, obliquely to the doorway, rendering him invisible from outside.

He looked but once, but it was with a gaze long, intent, all comprehensive—a gaze which swept through whole chapters in his book of life and read a horror worse than failure at the end. There was one wild throb at Steelman's heart; he felt the veins fill at his temples. He held his teeth together to suppress the moan of agony which claimed an utterance. Hope stood leaning against the trellis, one white hand half hidden in the luxuriant clematis. In her eyes Steelman saw the light which he had struggled to realize upon his canvas—which for days and weeks he had prayed that he might see. She was gazing directly at Lal as he lay there upon the wicker couch. Her pupils were dilated until from the depths of their purple pools there glowed a glory of white light. Her nostrils and half-parted lips seemed seeking more air, and Steelman heard a quick, tremulous lisp of breath drawn inward and smothered.

In one lightning flash he comprehended the height and depth of a tragedy which crushed his soul and turned his life to ashes. He had seen his Phædra and could paint her eyes now, those strange eyes which had eluded him so long.

Quietly he turned and walked back to his easel; the brushes were lying awaiting his hand; he touched them not, but gently took the palette-knife and without a tremor cut the picture into shreds. Then he went to a side table and opened a drawer, and as he took from it the object which he sought his eyes glanced hastily about the little studio, falling upon the familiar details of drapery and oddments which seemed like miniature landmarks in his everyday existence. The light fell through the window tinged with red and a low growl of thunder came from the west. A tear dropped upon a photograph of Lal lying upon the table. Another photograph, that of Hope, was standing in a silver frame. Steelman turned it face down and wrote something across the back.

Two seconds later Lal, suddenly awakened by a sharp report, sprang to his feet and rushed into the studio. Hope met him on the sill. She was white with an unnamable terror.

Steelman was lying on his face upon the rug, and a tiny blur of smoke arose from something shining beneath the easel.

The Artist.—Victory

A louder sound of thunder rumbled out of the west. The gust was coming fast.

The light falling through the north window had faded to a ghastly gray, touching with a deeper pallor the faces of a man and a woman, who spoke not at all, but stood together looking upon the mutilated Phædra.



THE ARTIST

BY FRANK ROE BATCHELDER

THERE came an unknown artist, sweet and shy,
 Into old Nature's studio one day.
 April was sketching there, and June and May;
 With careless glance they passed the stranger by,
 But Nature kindly bade her come and try
 Her skill among them; so, without delay,
 She set to work; and first she sketched a gray
 And cheerless landscape, with a frowning sky;
 Then with deft brush she laid fresh colors on,—
 Crimson and gold and green and russet-brown,—
 And over all the living sunlight shone.
 "Who art thou?" cried the students, looking down
 Upon her work, which put their own to shame.
 Blushing, she murmured, "Autumn is my name."



VICTORY

BY AGNES LEE

I PASSED her porch of cyclamen,
 And swifter hurried, passing it.
 I could not say *God bless her!* then,
 Lest God should know me hypocrite.

God bless her! I have said the thought.
 The fragrant crown is on her head.
 The golden steeple bells have wrought
 Their gladdest. She is gone to wed.

 And peace has come where passion stormed,
 For as again I passed her door,
 The sun came through the clouds, and warmed
 My heart as never sun before.

THE WAYWARDNESS OF SUSAN

By Luellen Cass Teters



THE last clod of earth had fallen on the grave of Josiah Flint; the few mourners, composed of Deacon Hardy in an old-fashioned shiny black coat and a beaver hat; Mr. Summers, a townsman, who sought to express his grief by wearing a tuberose in his buttonhole; and the newly made widow herself, smothered in heavy bombazine veils loaned for the occasion by Widow White, to whom these habiliments of mourning had lost their usefulness because of a recent matrimonial venture, bowed their heads while the shivering village choir chanted a lugubrious anthem about the patient waiting loved ones on the far-off shore in shrill, false tones. The minister, who had a blue, pinched look around his nose, paid a final tribute to the dead in a few words which brought the tears to the eyes of the soprano, who had gone to school with the deceased. Then the Widow, leaning on the Deacon's arm, led the way across the snow-covered mounds around them to the vehicles awaiting them outside the fence, and was assisted into a buggy, setting a jogging pace homeward for the small procession.

"Well, Susan,"—the Deacon paused to blow his nose; there was a raw dampness in the air,—“it's all over. Josiah was a pious soul; he ain't left a debt behind him. Even that bill for obtainin' goods under false pretence against him, when he sold Doctor Truax that lame colt, he up an' paid; he said he wanted to stand straight with the Lord. Josiah was a scholarly man, Susan—jest the kind of a man that had ought to have been at the head of his nation. He was jest cut out to be a coroner or a post-master; he could tell every capital of all the States without looking on the book; an' he learnt himself.”

The Widow made no reply; she seemed to crouch farther back on the seat under her sombre draperies.

"There wan't nothin' he touched but it turned to gold," resumed the Deacon meditatively. "I guess it'll seem familiar like to him a-steppin' on them golden streets up there an' standin' in front of the golden throne; Josiah took naterally to riches. Now there ain't nothin' Ruth an' I can do for you, is there, Susan?"

She shook her head slowly.

"Perhaps you'd better come an' stay all night with us," he went on, with a quick look at her. "It's mighty lonesome the first night after. I remember when our first, Willy, swallowed some tacks an' it made holes in his inner's. We had a handsome funeral for him, all in white, an' the man who undertakes wore white gloves to match. When we drove home I seen Ruth lookin' around all the rooms, hungry like; then I found her sobbin' over a little wooden doll Pap Brown had bought the year before he was born, thinkin' it would be a girl. 'Ruth,' says I, for I jest couldn't stand it, it was so lonesome, 'we jest can't help what the Lord has done,—takin' our Willy with tacks,—so you jest put your hat on again an' we'll go to the city for a few days.' I had to trade a horse, an' it was jest providence at this time. An' when we came home it wan't so hard. Hadn't you better come over, Susan? Ruth'll make you a hot berry pie,—them black ones you liked cannin' time,—an' you can try some of the hymns Josiah was so fond of on the organ."

"I don't want to come," she said bluntly. "I'd feel more nateral at home. Mrs. Kearns is washin' out the bedclothes to-day; if I get lonesome, I'll give her my old plum-colored waist an' a can of preserves an' have her stay all night."

"An' there's nothin' we can do?" persisted the Deacon as he helped her out at the gate. Before them, set squarely in the midst of the precise angles formed by closely cropped yew-trees, a garish white house with green shutters frowned severely; the dull red of the big barn and the granaries in the rear infused a touch of color in the dreariness of the scene; the dried grass showed unevenly in places where the snow had blown off.

"No, there ain't nothin'," she answered quietly.

She walked steadily along the flagging to the door, in her black garments making a dark discoloration against the neutrality around her. For one second, raising her veil from off her face, Susan Flint stood gazing out over the soft whiteness of the surrounding fields and the pink, vaporous bands of the horizon. Above her the exquisite yellow of the evening sky held her entranced; a deep breath escaped her.

"Thank God!" she murmured to herself, "thank God!"

Mrs. Kearns was finishing her ironing as she stepped into the kitchen with an undisturbed mien.

"You're back?" she called out cheerily. "It didn't take long, did it? I guess not half as long as when he first come cryin' into the world. Did everything go off smooth, Susan? What did Mis' Swanson wear, an' was her voice hoarse? Them sopranos don't show off well in cold weather; it makes their noses red. I hope Jane Andrews didn't wear that hat with the red roses—an' him a-lyin' there helpless

before her. Sech wickedness. You ain't took cold, have you, dearie? I'll boil some water an' make you a steamin' toddy. Now don't take it so to heart, Susan. Us mortals all have to go that way."

Susan stoically removed her borrowed hat and veil and carefully wrapped them in a neat bundle; then she took off the black dress trimmed with heavy crape bands, a gift of the owner of the trappings of woe because of its too economic dimensions. Out of one eye, as she deposited her ironing-board in the woodshed, Mrs. Kearns saw her disappear in the sacred confines of the spare chamber. She had no compunctions in tiptoeing after. Through the half-opened door she saw Susan bending over an old trunk that had not been unlocked for years. She took out a bright pink dress trimmed jauntily with white lace and calmly put it on.

Mrs. Kearns could no longer contain herself.

"Them ain't mournin' colors, Susan Flint." She bounded into the room beside her. "It ain't showin' respect to the dead, wearin' pink."

Susan refused to speak. She rolled up the black dress she had just taken off and, followed by Mrs. Kearns, stalked solemnly to the kitchen. The fire was burning brightly; she raised one of the lids of the stove and shoved the dress into the fire.

"You're plum crazy, Susan," gasped the voice behind her.

Susan turned sharply around; there was a peculiar bright red spot on either cheek.

"Mrs. Kearns," she raised her voice piercingly, "I ain't goin' to be no hypocrite; it's a mockery for me to be pretendin' to mourn for Josiah Flint when I ain't. I'm glad he's gone; I'm free now. Do you know what that means to me?" She broke off wildly, her eyes traversing the barren-looking rooms and the grim severity of the walls which had bounded her life. "I've been shut up in a prison for twenty years, Mrs. Kearns, an' there ain't one minute of those years but I have prayed to the Lord to let me die—I was that worked out an' achin'. When a prisoner is let loose from a prison he ain't goin' to mourn for it, is he? That's the way it is with me—I haven't a mite of grievin' in my heart. An' everybody says to me to-day, 'Susan, he left you a pile of money.' He didn't make that money, Mrs. Kearns, half as much as I did. He didn't get up freezin' cold mornin's, lettin' me stay in bed while he fed the cows an' milked them; he didn't do the cookin' in dog-days for six big-eatin' farm-hands while I set under the trees snorin'. Lord, how my poor body has ached me, Mrs. Kearns; that's why I couldn't have a child, I guess; there wa'n't no life left in me, slavin' so hard. An' when the snow lay frozen on the ground Josiah wouldn't let me use the horses for fear of makin' them take cold; he didn't care how my lungs got stopped up, even if my mother's

Cousin Lidy's daughter died of gallopin' consumption before she was nineteen. An' in hot weather, when it seemed my head was burstin' off of me, he wouldn't let me use the dog for churnin', but I had to trot them boards myself makin' butter, an' he took the money for it. Oh Lord, twenty years of it, Mrs. Kearns. Do you know what that means?"

A dry, convulsive sob shook her spare form; she wiped her eyes across one of her sleeves.

"I ain't had no girlhood, Mrs. Kearns," she resumed defiantly. "My folks made me marry Josiah when I was sixteen instead of the man I loved. I ain't never been to a party in my life, like you other folks; Josiah said it was extravagant, an' drivin' wore out the horses' shoes. I ain't never had a white dress in my life—every time I see one it jest seems to me that the sun is a-shinin' on a garden full of pink roses an' an angel is singin' soft somewheres. Lord, how I've wanted one; but Josiah said I was settin' too much on the things of the world. So every year I made my old dresses over while he bought new ploughs an' threshin'-machines to lighten his labor. That's why I stayed away from meetin' an' got folks to sayin' I was an infidel—I didn't have anything to wear, Mrs. Kearns. An' now——" She sobbed softly, drawing her breath in, in long, shuddering sighs. "You don't know what it means to me, Mrs. Kearns," her usual calm tone sounded again. "I'm free. It's jest like walkin' barefoot over the blisterin' sand, longin' for a drop of water, an' givin' up in despair, when right before you a beautiful spring bubbles up. I'm not mournin'—I'm free, now."

She sank into a chair, throwing her hands over her face while she cried unrestrainedly. The clock ticked in an even monotone; Mrs. Kearns screwed up one eye vehemently in order to maintain control of her feelings. She was defenceless in such situations, and took refuge in a series of hearty sympathetic exclamations. Twice she essayed to speak, but something seemed to rise in her throat making speech impossible.

"An' now"—Susan sat upright in her chair, winking the tears off of her eyelashes—"I'm goin' to have all of them things he cheated me out of; I don't care if I am thirty-six years old, I'm goin' to have a white dress with a blue sash jest as I wanted it to wear to Jennie Dalton's party when I was twenty an' Josiah wouldn't let me go; an' I'm goin' to get a red parasol like Mrs. Andrews's city boarder had when I was twenty-five; an' I'm goin' to take lessons on the banjo so's I can play dance-tunes like Amy Morris did when she come back from the seashore when I was thirty. An' there's lot more things too."

"There, there, dearie," remonstrated Mrs. Kearns in a motherly

tone, "I guess you took cold standin' so long in the open air. I'll jest make you a cup of herb tea an' get you to perspirin'——"

"Mrs. Kearns," Susan leant impressively towards her with a solemn expression on her face, "you can't sweat out them twenty years. That's what's ailin' me; it ain't my liver or my kidneys. I've got to begin doctorin' at once; I'll take my first dose next week in entertainin' the sewin'-society an' make it real fashionable like. An' I'll wear that white dress too. I don't care if it isn't over winter yet; it ain't winter in my heart; it's jest like spring with little flowers buddin' up in me."

"Why, Susan Flint! how can you be so disrespectful to your dead?"

"I'm not goin' to pretend a lie," Susan declared shortly. "I haven't a livin' relative now who'd talk about me for it; my poor father an' mother died thinkin' what a fine marriage they'd made for me. I ain't goin' to let on any longer."

"I guess if you can't show respect, the sewin'-society will." Mrs. Kearns bridled up aggressively. "They won't none of them come."

"You jest see; they're too fond of good eatin' to stay away. I'll send them some of them beautiful invitations in poetry. Mrs. Cushman give me the address of a city man who is real accomplished with his pen writin' visitin'-cards an' letters. I'm goin' to get some of them cards too. I'm goin' to enjoy all of the pleasures of life before I die, Mrs. Kearns, an' I've always wanted some stylish visitin'-cards with them flourishes around the capitals."

Mrs. Kearns maintained a discouraging silence; she only hoped the minister would not hear of her radicalism. She let Susan know by the way she held her head that she did not approve of such waywardness, and threw herself so industriously into the tasks around the house that Susan sullenly retreated to the gloomy parlor and shut the door noisily after her.

"You needn't mind about stayin', Mrs. Kearns," she called back over her shoulder before she disappeared. "I can get Mrs. Cushman's Loretta if I want anyone. The hired man's here too."

The amazement which greeted Susan Flint's appearance on the streets the week after the funeral in a bright blue cloth dress and a red hat was only paralleled by the surprise with which the villagers received some massive-looking invitations summoning them to her house for an early afternoon. Attractive rumors concerning the fruitage of the home-made strawberry wine she was going to open in honor of the occasion disturbed the air; there were further delightful hints as to an enormous frosted cake bought in town which was to contain such pleasurable surprises as a gold ring, a silver thimble, a silver toothpick, and a gold pencil. That it was to be a dress affair was understood by the circulation of the news of Mrs. Flint's purchase in town of a white dress with a train.

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Speculative neighbors grew to gossip indulgences over the back fences as later information swept to their ears.

"My Loretta heard the bandmaster say Susan has hired him an' the horn man to play some tunes," confided Mrs. Cushman to a striking resemblance of herself in a dark calico dress clinging helplessly to the opposite side of the fence that divided their respective yards. "I don't see how Joe Kent can play, seein' his teeth are out. But I heard him practisin' somethin' grand yesterday, all little blowin' sounds as if the wind was dancin' in the horn an' was jest holdin' its sides laughin'."

"Mrs. Andrews told me at singin' t'other night that Susan is goin' to have a finger-bowl for each person to use," returned the whisper. "But you needn't say I said it, Mrs. Cushman. I know this much: Susan Flint will jest have things grand when she entertains, an' it wouldn't surprise me a bit if she hired some coffee-spoons to use in the cups."

Susan herself was unruffled by the commotion around her; she had planned everything deliberately; in fact, the ideas which she was now carrying out had been twenty years developing. She could not be accused of any unseemly haste in the matter. Perhaps that was the reason she had such admirable control of herself when the minister came to remonstrate with her on her sinful actions that same week. She seated him in her easiest horse-hair chair in front of a snapping log fire in the parlor, and supplied him with a glass of home-made wine before he could plunge into the subject uppermost in his mind. There was such an indefinable solace in the warm room, or perhaps in the velvety oiliness of the wine, that the errand on which he had come lost its imperativeness.

"Sister Flint,"—he finally aroused his ebbing valor,—“as your spiritual adviser and counsellor I have called to-day to remonstrate with you on your waywardness and forgetfulness of the dead. Josiah——”

"Wait," she interposed quickly. "Brother Simons, have you ever sat in this parlor before, before the fire, a-drinkin' my best wine?" She watched him sharply.

The minister shook his head, not comprehending her meaning.

"An' Josiah lived twenty years here a-knowin' you," she said significantly. "Now, go on."

"As I was goin' to say, Josiah ain't been in his tomb two weeks yet," continued the minister.

"Thirteen days," Susan remarked cheerfully.

"An' I hear that you are taking up with the ways of the devil, Sister Flint. Brother Andrews said he saw you buyin' a pack of cards at the grocery the other night."

"I give them to Joe Kent's crippled boy, that can't move out of

his chair," explained Susan. "He has to entertain hisself, seein' his mother goes out washin'."

"Sister Flint,"—the minister arose to his feet, annoyed that he was unable to destroy her placidity,—“that sewin' society sha'n't come here, showin' disrespect to the dead that way. I won't have it in my church.”

Susan stood up, and faced him hostilely.

"Brother Simons, every one of them women are comin' to my house, an' you sha'n't prevent it," she cried shrilly. "I've wanted to have them here for twenty years; I'm afraid to wait, now that I've got the chance, for fear something will happen."

"I won't let them come," he cried emphatically. "You must give this party up—after awhile, perhaps——"

"Brother Simons," Susan interrupted him fiercely, "them women are comin' if I have to go after them myself, an' you'll see it too."

But his grim, intolerant smile worried her; she could not rid herself of the disagreeable impression it left.

When the afternoon of the eventful day arrived she grew more and more apprehensive. Long before the hour appointed for the guests to arrive she was attired in a much-ruffled, airy-looking white lawn dress buttoned up the back, with a blue sash tied around her waist in accordance with the dream that had so long tantalized her. But, somehow, it did not suit the severity of her face, and only emphasized the tired lines.

She was dissatisfied with the result.

"Mebbe it would have been different twenty years ago," she tried to console herself; "an' perhaps it will be jest that way with that red parasol or them banjo lessons." It dimly preyed on her; these things which had been unattainable for years appeared to lose their flavor on realization.

She took up her station expectantly by the parlor door. In the kitchen Mrs. Kearns, very red of face, in a bright green waist that had long since grown too tight, was superintending the arrangement of a cap on a country-girl's head, hired for the occasion to help serve refreshments. Mrs. Kearns had been mollified by a persuasive gift of tart jellies and outgrown dresses.

"Ain't it about time for them, Susan?" She thrust her head through the parlor door.

Susan shook her head.

"It ain't quite the fashionable hour yet," she answered hastily. "They all understand it's goin' to be real toney. Has that horn man come yet? When he does, have him step in so's we can fix his place so everybody can see him. It's too bad his teeth are all out; they was so ornamental to his mouth."

"He blows better without them," argued Mrs. Kearns. "It makes a fine sweep for the wind down his throat."

Susan sat alone, nervously watching the clock; each half hour it ticked off confirmed the minister's threat. At three o'clock she arose and looked sharply out of the windows: there was not a vehicle or a person in sight. Something blinded her eyes; the utter frustration of her long-cherished hopes after waiting twenty years for their consummation overwhelmed her. She walked quickly out to the kitchen; the two musicians, who had just arrived, were removing their overcoats; on the tables an array of delicious cakes and sandwiches mocked her.

"Mrs. Kearns," she said despairingly, "they ain't comin'; I guess the minister won't let them."

"I told you so, Susan," Mrs. Kearns declared astutely with irritating complacency.

"Yes," Susan cried sharply, "but that ain't goin' to help it. I'm goin' to have them people here to-day if I die for it—I've built up on it for twenty years; I'm not going to fail now. An' what's more, the minister has got to help me collect them. It ain't wicked when they was goin' to sew on them red shirts for the heathen, Mrs. Kearns. You tell the hired man to hitch up the hay-wagon an' put some robes on the bottom; I guess it'll hold them——"

"He'll never let them come, Susan," Mrs. Kearns paused to prophesy before executing the orders.

"I guess he won't refuse me this time," Susan replied wisely.

It seemed but a few minutes later that the big hay-wagon, in which Susan sat with a rapidly beating heart, uncertain as to the success of her move, rolled clumsily towards the minister's modest frame house near the church. A little boy in a frayed coat was playing with a top in the yard.

"Your pa home?" Susan stopped at the gate.

"Yep," he said without looking up. She presented herself at once before the minister in his low-ceilinged study, where he was bent over a table, preparing a sermon. He glanced up in surprise at the unexpected apparition, arising to his feet.

"Why, Sister Flint!" he ejaculated, extending his hand. Susan refused to see it.

"I guess you've kept your word," she said tremulously. "There ain't none of them come." //

"It would have been wicked if they had," he replied gravely.

"Not wicked," Susan cried imploringly. "Not wicked, Brother Simons, when we was all goin' to sew on them red shirts for the heathen; not wicked, when I worked my fingers to the bone for twenty years, an' Josiah would never let me have them. An' I put a wax wreath on Josiah's picture to-day, an' tied a black bow on his cane

standin' behind the door. That ain't not showin' respect, Brother Simons."

Her voice cut through him; its note of anguish beat acutely on his ear. It was like the pleading of one condemned. Susan reached in her pocket and drew forth a large document. She coughed awkwardly before essaying speech.

"I—I brought this mortgage Josiah held on the church," she said timidly. "He give orders the week before he was took to a lawyer in town to collect the money—the man wrote me last night about it. I thought I would bring it over, an' perhaps you an' I could plan to tear it up." Her troubled eyes scanned his impassive countenance. "I want them women to come to my house," she told him frankly. "I've wanted them for twenty years, Brother Simons."

"Well?" he supplemented, to draw out her ideas.

"I brought the big hayin'-wagon with me—I thought perhaps you an' Sister Simons an' little Tommy would drive around with me collectin' them——" Her voice trembled so that she had to stop; he could see her work-hardened fingers shaking through the fringe of her shawl.

"Someway," Susan went on as he stood irresolute, "them things I've wanted so long don't seem as I thought they would—even this sewin'-society I've had to fight for. I guess it wa'n't never intended I should have any of them; they are for someone younger. An' it would do me jest as much good if I took some nice girl an' give her them things; we'd travel too; I've read about such beautiful places in books. I guess it's in my blood to be a great traveller; my grandfather was to Niagara Falls twice. I was tellin' Mrs. Kearns about my plans to-day. I guess the Lord never meant for me to have these things I've wanted, after all—it wa'n't Josiah so much. An' this sewin' society——" Her voice was smothered in a sob. She put her hands over her eyes, rocking to and fro in her grief. The minister went to her side, patting her arm in compassion.

"Now, don't you take on so, Sister Flint," he said cheerily. "It isn't worth the tears. You jest brighten up a bit while I go an' tell Miranda to change her dress. We'll take you home first so you can be all ready to receive them, an' we'll drive on an' bring every livin' soul we can find to your house."

"Wait," Susan extended the paper to him. He shook his head.

"That's not why I am doin' it," he said, repulsing her effort to get it into his hand. "I'm doin' it for your sake, Sister Flint."

Susan held the document aloft, then tore it into tiny pieces.

"There ain't no debt on the church now, Brother Simons," she said tearfully.

She burst in on Mrs. Kearns like a whirlwind, her cheeks aflame,

her eyes shining. There was coffee to make afresh, and extra plates must be brought forth.

"They're comin'," she cried excitedly. "But, Mrs. Kearns, I've had such a time over it that I've decided not to try them other things I want. Somethin' will happen sure as I do. Ripe apples don't come in wintertime; an' all durin' those twenty years that I wanted them things I didn't know I was gettin' farther away from the time for them in my years. I guess I can please myself jest as much givin' pleasure to someone else. I'm goin' to ask Mrs. Cushman to let her Loretta stay with me awhile; they've had sech bad luck since Loretta's pa died, an' the family is so big. I'd like Loretta to have all them things I wanted when I was her age. Someway, it always seemed to me that she should have been my girl; I'll make her as happy as I can, an' we'll take a trip to Californy, where roses bloom the year round. They say there's a nateral golden gate there. I'd like to step in that golden gate with Loretta Cushman's hand in mine—she has sech sunshiny hair an' blue eyes like her pa——"

"Susan," said Mrs. Kearns sharply, "don't you be hippocritin'; it ain't only because of Loretta Cushman herself you want to do that; there's another reason. Was her pa that man——" She stopped abruptly.

Susan flashed her a tender, quivering look; then she glanced out of the window at the old cemetery where the gaunt white tombstones arose protectingly in their silent sentinelship; the pitying shroudal of winter softened the harsh outlines of the earth-mounds.

"Yes, Mrs. Kearns," she said simply.



ANNE HATHAWAY

BY ETHNA CARBERY

HERE did you stand, so shy and sweet,
With face turned to the moss-grown way
That William trod with eager feet
To you, at end of day.

Above you tinted apple-blooms
Showered their leaves across the lane,
And round you stole the soft perfumes
Of flowers after rain—

Old cottage scents that rise at dusk
From rosemary and jessamine,
The passionate, warm breath of musk,
And odorous woodbine.

The blush of girlhood is not yours,
You are a woman grave and fair;
Yet in your eyes your youth endures,
And in your sunset hair.

Across the fields at eventide,
With jaunty step and smile elate,
He came and sought you, bluebell-eyed,
Tryst-keeping at the gate.

And, "Sweetheart, hast thou waited long?"
And, "Nay, love, but a little space;"
Then was *that* but the throstle's song,
Or lovers face to face?

He lingered near you, all unchid,
He prayed, as only lovers can;
He knew the worth your true heart hid,
O fair, O happy Anne!

Dear, did you dream in days to come
How great your lover's name would be?
How spell of his should wreath your home
With immortality?

How strangers by your hearth should sit
And close their eyes, and seem to view,
Through vistas dim, your shadow flit,
And William's shadow too?

Or did you live those far-off years
Love-sheltered, holding home the best,
Haply, no envious, worldly fears
Stirring your gentle breast?

O sweet dead woman! blessed above
All women of those distant days;
Who knew the depth of Shakespeare's love,
And merited his praise.

THE DARK HORSE

A SPORTING SKETCH

By Alfred Stoddart



I.

LORIMER was riding Sir Peter at the Liverpool. He was trying the big chestnut over the jumps in Ralph Goring's schooling paddock at Oak Lodge. It was not until the horse had steadfastly refused the formidable leap, and thereby almost unseated him, that Lorimer was aware of his audience.

At first he only saw the boy, a good-looking little chap of ten standing on top of the stone wall which divided the Oak Lodge grounds from those of the Beckwith place. But when, at a second glance, he observed a very pretty girl of perhaps twenty-three standing behind him his face flushed with annoyance.

It was bad enough that Sir Peter should disgrace him by boosting him out on his neck before a stranger. But the sudden consciousness that he did not look his best in a flannel shirt and whipcord livery and leggings was most disconcerting to Lorimer, who was somewhat particular about his clothes.

Those he had on were the property of Sandell, Ralph Goring's head groom. Lorimer had run down to Oak Lodge a week before the Meadowthorpe Races in order to become acquainted with Ralph Goring's big chestnut Sir Peter, which he was going to ride in the Master's Cup. He had arrived unexpectedly and found his host absent for the day.

Having, therefore, exhausted his patience over the sporting papers and magazines, he had strolled towards the stables. The idea of a gallop on Sir Peter had suggested itself and it appealed to him strongly. But his things had not arrived, and he disliked helping himself from Goring's wardrobe. It was Sandell who had offered to lend him his things, and Lorimer was quick to accept. He had just given Sir Peter a warming-up canter and tried him over a couple of brush hurdles when he turned his head towards the Liverpool.

As he rode the horse back after his refusal he saw that the boy had jumped down from the wall and was running towards him.

"Oh!" cried the little fellow as he came within speaking distance, "I thought it was Sandell."

"You did, did you?" returned Lorimer grimly, once more reminded of his whip-cord attire.

"Yes. I guess you must be a new man—aren't you?"

"Eh! Well, yes, I'm a new man hereabouts."

"'Cause, you see, I know all Mr. Goring's grooms."

"Do you, really?"

"And I never saw you before. Are you a jockey?"

"Yes, I'm a jockey."

"That's great. I wish I was a jockey. Polly says gentlemen are never jockeys, but I would rather be a jockey than a gentleman. Wouldn't you?"

"I don't know. You see, I'm only a jockey, so I don't know how it would feel to be a gentleman. But who is Polly, anyway?"

"Polly? Why, that's Polly sitting on the wall. She knows Sir Peter too. Would you mind riding him over there?"

"Not a bit."

A smile played about Lorimer's lips. The youngster had plainly taken him for a groom. He was curious to see how Polly would place him. Moreover, he was curious about Polly herself.

She was distinctly pretty—that was evident at first glance. Her hair, which was of a sunny brown color, was drawn back just neatly enough, despite certain rebellious strands which would not be coerced. Her eyes were blue and a little mischievous. Her mouth reflected some of the latter quality, albeit it was the prettiest mouth in the world, and she had excellent teeth. The dress she wore was of unpretentious gray stuff which gave Lorimer no clue as to her social standing.

"Evidently a nurse or a nursery governess," thought Lorimer to himself as he rode up to her, "though she is a beauty and no mistake. Well, if she takes me for a groom too, I sha'n't spoil a good situation."

The girl smiled as he approached.

"Did Paul make you come?" she asked. "Sir Peter and he are old friends."

"He tells me you know the horse too," said Lorimer.

"We have met before." Indeed, the chestnut had already thrust his soft muzzle forward to be stroked by the girl's hands—very pretty and white hands they were too, thought Lorimer, though strong and capable looking.

"The—the other man has often brought him over here to see us," she continued.

"This is splendid," thought Lorimer. "She has certainly taken me for a groom. Well, I shall 'play the game.'"

"Sandell's got a nice place down 'ere," he said tentatively, carefully dropping an "h" in order to act his part.

The mischievous lines about the girl's mouth deepened and her eyes twinkled.

"Sandell!" she ejaculated. "Oh, he has a snap."

Lorimer groaned in spirit. To think of such slang issuing from that beautiful mouth.

"He knows it too," she continued; "you might think he owned the place from the airs of him."

Evidently, thought Lorimer, Sandell had been remiss in his attentions to this pretty maid. Where were the fellow's eyes?

"Between you and me," he said confidentially, "I don't believe Sandell knows a good thing when he sees it."

The girl laughed and tossed her head saucily. "Oh, well," she cried, "there are others!"

"Sure. Here's one right now." Lorimer threw himself from the horse, but the girl flushed a little and drew away.

"Come, Paul," she said, "we must go."

"Won't you come again and see the 'oss?" Lorimer pleaded. "I shall be a-schooling of 'im every day 'ere now till the race meeting."

"Thank you."

"And will you teach me to be a jockey?" asked Paul eagerly.

"Sure, I will, sir. But you must come every day," said Lorimer, little doubting but that the pretty maid would have to accompany the little chap.

II.

"SORRY to have missed you, Lorimer," said Ralph Goring when he returned; "you must have had a beastly dull afternoon."

"Oh, I don't know. I worked the horse a bit."

"He's a little raw yet?"

"Yes, but he will do. I say, Goring?"

"Yes, old chap?"

"Did you ever notice the Beckwiths' nursemaid?"

"Can't say I ever did. What about her?"

"Oh, nothing."

There was a dinner-party that night at the Beckwiths', and when Polly Anstruthers had dressed she knocked at the door of her hostess's dressing-room. Ralph Goring's new jockey would have opened his eyes very wide could he have seen her then.

"Oh, it's Polly," said Mrs. Beckwith with a welcoming smile. "Come in, Polly."

Miss Anstruthers, in a superb evening gown of white satin, trimmed with quantities of rare old lace, was quite a contrast to the Polly of

the fields in her demure little gray frock. But the blue eyes, the sunny hair, and the mischief-loving mouth were the same.

"Such fun!" she cried, with a little ripple of laughter as she sank into a low chair by the open grate.

"What mischief are you up to now, Polly?" asked her hostess good-naturedly.

"Well, you see, Paul and I went for a walk this afternoon, and Paul coaxed me as far as the wall which divides Mr. Goring's place from yours. Mr. Goring has a sort of little steeple-chase course to train his horses there, you know?" Mrs. Beckwith nodded.

"There was a man there riding Sir Peter over the jumps—a gentleman. He had the queerest looking things on you ever saw—livery, I think. But, of course, one can tell a gentleman, as a rule, even in livery."

Miss Anstruthers laughed softly to herself.

"But he thought I couldn't. He actually thought I couldn't. And do you know why?"

"I'm sure I can't guess why," Mrs. Beckwith replied.

"He took me for a maid—Paul's nurse, I suppose." Miss Anstruthers's mirth was irrepressible. "And he thought he could fool me."

"Poor fellow! he must have felt cheap when he found out."

"But he didn't find out. That's the best part of it. And I am to go there often,—with Paul, of course,—and I think he wants to be my 'young man.'"

"Polly, you are a hopeless case. I'm afraid I shall have to write to your father."

"If you do, I shall never speak to you again."

"Then I won't write."

It was a pleasant sensation for the beautiful Miss Anstruthers to be frankly admired and made love to for herself alone—or, at least, it was pleasant to her to be sure that her millions had nothing to do with Lorimer's attention. To be sure, his love-making in the character he had assumed was somewhat crude. He was too busy endeavoring to drop his "h's" to frame his thoughts very well. But he was always respectful, even when he tried to say the kind of things which he fondly imagined a groom might say to his sweetheart.

Paul Beckwith, Polly, Sir Peter, and Lorimer met at the gap in the stone wall under the big chestnut-tree every afternoon. Lorimer had discarded the livery, but he wore unpretentious riding-clothes such as any upper servant might wear.

The conversation with Polly was strained on his side from the constant necessity of acting his part. To Polly—being a woman—it

came easier. But in spite of her amusement she grew more reserved every day.

He did not, of course, dare to ask her if he might go to see her at the Beckwith house, and he would not ask her to meet him elsewhere. Once, indeed, he invited her to take a drive in the evening, saying that he was free to take a horse and trap from the Oak Lodge stables.

She had indignantly refused, and he did not repeat the invitation. After that he spent more time schooling the big chestnut hunter and humoring little Paul into believing that he was learning to be a jockey.

He would take the little fellow on the saddle before him and send Sir Peter over the grass at a swinging gallop, a proceeding which so delighted the embryo horseman that he could scarcely contain his joy. Lorimer saw too that Paul's pleasure brought a kindlier light into the girl's face. She seemed to be very fond indeed of her little charge.

All these things happened inside of a week, but the strangest thing of all happened during the last few days—two days before the race meeting was to take place.

Polly and little Paul had appeared at the gap in the wall as usual, and Lorimer, who was on excellent terms with his mount by this time, had cantered Sir Peter over to them and dismounted.

He shook Paul's manfully extended hand and turned to Polly. Unconsciously she extended her hand also, but blushed as he took it and kept it a moment in his own.

"Are you coming to the races?" he asked her.

"If Mrs. Beckwith will let me. I want to see you ride Sir Peter."

Lorimer hoisted little Paul to the saddle and sprang up behind him. Sir Peter moved off at a gentle canter, as though he were quite aware of his precious burden. Polly had brought a book, which she now opened.

Lorimer took the boy farther than usual that day. They cantered out of the training paddock, around the stables, and a short distance down the road.

When they returned a man was talking to Polly. Lorimer recognized him as Robert Fullerton, who was staying at the Beckwiths'. Not wishing to come in contact with him then, Lorimer put little Paul down at some little distance and bade him run to Polly. Then the latter, much to his disgust, turned and walked homeward, accompanied by Fullerton and Paul, not vouchsafing him even so much as a parting smile.

Lorimer was not only angry—he was shocked. Moreover, and this was the strangest thing of all, he was jealous—frankly, undisguisedly, and unmistakably jealous.

He had given Sir Peter the stiffest half hour's work that the big

chestnut ever experienced, and was just about to turn his head towards the stables when he saw little Paul appear at the gap in the stone wall. He waved to Lorimer, who saw that he had something in his hand.

It proved to be a note, scrawled on a fragment of paper and enclosing a four-leaved clover. It ran:

"I may not see you before the races—may be never again.
But I wish you luck, and send you something to wear in your
boot. Yours,

"POLLY."

It was absurd that Lorimer should kiss the little scrawl, and it was exceedingly unwise to do so before Paul. If he knew as much about women as he did about horses, he might have known that the first question Polly would ask her messenger would be,—

"What did he do when he read it?"

III.

THERE was already a great gathering of people on the Meadowthorpe Country Club's steeple-chase course when Ralph Goring and Lorimer alighted from the former's dog-cart.

"There is a girl here to-day you ought to meet," said Goring to his guest.

"Who is she?" asked Lorimer listlessly, looking about in search of little Paul—though not purely on little Paul's account.

"Miss Anstruthers. She's staying with the Beckwiths, and she's a beauty. Old Anstruthers's daughter—of the nail trust, you know. There's the Beckwith drag now. Come, I'll introduce you."

The Beckwith drag had been unhorsed and drawn up to the rail. As Lorimer approached he saw a vision in a most adorable pink gown sitting on the box seat and chatting gayly with the other occupants of the drag. It was Polly.

He flushed to the roots of his hair when Goring presented him. But Polly simply smiled in a friendly way, as though she had never laid eyes on him before. They exchanged one or two commonplaces—Lorimer scarcely knew what he was saying, and he was relieved when Ralph Goring told him they had better go to the saddling paddock.

Lorimer had almost come to the conclusion that Polly did not recognize him, or, at any rate, did not intend to acknowledge their former acquaintance, when she leaned forward to whisper something.

"Have you got the four-leaved clover," she asked. He tapped the leg of his boot with his whip and nodded smilingly.

"Then good luck—and may the best man win."

She smiled significantly. Robert Fullerton was just descending

from the drag, as he was to ride his own horse, Major Domo, in the Masters' Cup. Her last words were addressed to both men, and Lorimer pondered over them deeply as he made his way to the weighing-in tent.

For Fullerton, he remembered, had long been attentive to the rich and beautiful Miss Anstruthers—so much so that society had begun to consider them almost engaged.

They had gone to the first two of the three and one-half miles journey 'cross country for the Masters' Cup, and there were only four horses now in the race.

Dick Middleton, on Bricktop, was leading, closely followed by Tom Halliday on his gray mare, Surprise. Fullerton, on Major Domo, and Lorimer, on Sir Peter, were galloping side by side, watching each other jealously.

Lorimer saw Bricktop rise to the in-and-out of post and rail, which he took cleverly, and he saw Middleton draw his whip. It was about time, he concluded, to move up.

He shook Sir Peter's reins, and the big chestnut responded at once. He shot forward, but Major Domo was not to be so easily distanced. Lorimer passed Halliday's gray mare and had overtaken Bricktop when something flew by on his near side like a huge black shadow.

It was Major Domo, Fullerton's big brown horse. There was still a mile to be covered, and Lorimer saw that his work was cut out for him.

He took a new grasp of the reins and steadied Sir Peter as they approached the Liverpool with its guard rail, its yawning ditch, and its fence and hedge beyond.

Major Domo cleared the jump in splendid style. After him Sir Peter and Bricktop took it as one horse. There were now only two or three brush-topped fences between them and the finish, and Lorimer settled to ride the race of his life.

Fullerton's big brown had cleared the last obstacle without a mistake, and Fullerton, crouching low on his shoulder, was urging the horse to exert every particle of speed he possessed. Nearer and nearer they drew to the crowd of spectators, who had suddenly ceased to shout and now awaited the finish in breathless silence.

But gallant Sir Peter is far from beaten. He draws away from the tired Bricktop easily now and is presently at Major Domo saddle-girths. Fullerton is flogging the brown, but Lorimer has only raised his whip once. He knows that the splendid chestnut beneath him is doing his utmost to win regardless of whip or spur.

On they come—Sir Peter has crept up—he has reached the brown's shoulder—they are neck and neck. There is a wild shout from the

crowd, and every muscle in Lorimer's body relaxes joyfully. Sir Peter has won by a scant length.

Lorimer sought Polly Anstruthers to receive her congratulations, but in spite of himself he could not do so with very good grace.

"You deceived me very shamefully, Miss Anstruthers," he said rather bitterly.

"And you," she mocked,—"you had no intention of deceiving me—had you?"

They were walking towards the club-house together. Fullerton passed them with a scowl, though he had grace enough to return and congratulate Lorimer.

"But, you see, I did not succeed in deceiving you," continued Lorimer when they were alone again. "And, anyway, it didn't make any difference to you."

"What do you mean by a difference?"

"You know what I mean."

"Do I? And how do you know it didn't make any difference to me?"

Lorimer glanced at her quickly, but she had turned away to hide a tell-tale blush. They turned away from the crowd, and Lorimer found a seat for Polly under a big chestnut-tree in the Country Club lawn. The bugle sounded for the next race—the flag fell—the race was run—yet they knew it not. For three-quarters of an hour they talked there together, and when their tête-à-tête was interrupted by Mrs. Beckwith and Ralph Goring at the end of that time the affair had been definitely settled. The best man had won.



THE SILENT HOUR

BY J. J. FRANK

THE clarion in the distance fades;
The echoes of the full-mouthed pack
Fainter and fainter travel back;
The western sky gleams through the glades;
The shadow grows more deep and black.

The vesper-bell its gentle call
Sounds through the ever-whispering shades;
The peace of twilight all pervades,
While where the blue hills rise and fall
The far-off horn, forgotten, fades.

THE WINTER WINDOW- GARDEN

By Eben E. Rexford

Author of "Home Floriculture"



THE window-garden in winter is often a failure, so far as flowers are concerned. While there is always a great deal of beauty in "the green things growing," most persons are disappointed if there is not the brightness and cheer of bloom to relieve the monotony of the white world outside, and remind us of the last summer's beauty, or hint to us of the summer that is coming. This failure generally results from mistakes made in the selection of the plants with which we fill our windows. There are many kinds adapted to window culture which cannot be coaxed into bloom at this season of the year, and there are many kinds which would bloom in winter had they received the proper treatment to fit them for winter use. But because this treatment was not given at the right time they are worthless for the purposes of the person who loves flowers and would like to have her windows full of them from January to May. It will be readily understood from this that the success of a window-garden from which we expect blossoms depends very largely on the kinds and the condition of the plants we select to fill it.

It is true that the list of really good winter-flowering plants adapted to culture in the living-room is not a large one, but it is also true that there are enough of these to afford considerable latitude in the way of a choice. We need not duplicate our neighbors' gardens in furnishing our own if we know enough about plants to make an intelligent selection. But many amateur window-gardeners are not sufficiently familiar with plants to make such selection, and they must depend on the advice of others who have had experience along this line. It is with the hope that this paper may be of benefit to such persons that I have undertaken its preparation.

All things considered, the Geranium is our best plant for winter flowering. It blooms freely and constantly, in most instances, and adapts itself to the conditions prevailing in the ordinary living-room more readily than almost any other plant I have any knowledge of.

And it requires very little care. Its ability to take care of itself is one of the strong arguments in its favor, especially with the amateur who is distrustful of his skill in the management of plants that insist on having their peculiarities humored. It has little to boast of in the way of attractive foliage,—though a plant well set with vigorous, healthy foliage is far from being unhandsome,—but it has a right to pride itself on the beauty of its flowers. Some of the scarlet varieties are so exceedingly brilliant that they actually seem to impart a feeling of warmth to the observer. The little child who declared that auntie's Geraniums were "on fire" was conscious of this suggestion of heat in the intensity of color which characterizes some of the most richly colored sorts. Others are extremely delicate in color and tint. Some are pure white. All the recently introduced varieties have large, wide-petalled flowers, borne in trusses of good size, on long stalks. A well-developed plant, symmetrical in shape and properly furnished with foliage to serve as a background against which to display its blossoms effectively, is a magnificent sight when in full bloom, notwithstanding the fact that some persons sneer at the Geranium as being "common."

All beauty is common in a sense, and I would as soon object to the sky and the sunshine because the beauty of them is for the enjoyment of everybody, therefore "common," as to seek to disparage a flower because it was one that everybody could grow and enjoy. Anyone can undertake the culture of the Geranium with reasonable certainty of success who can give it a good soil to grow in, water enough to keep it always moist at the roots, a sunny location, and freedom from frost. Insects seldom attack it. It has a healthy constitution that gives it immunity from the diseases so common to most other plants, and it will reward you for the care it receives at your hands by making your window bright with bloom as few other plants can. Therefore you make no mistake in selecting it for your window-garden. But be sure to get plants that have not been allowed to bloom during the summer. Such plants have exhausted themselves, and, nine times out of ten, they will insist on taking a rest during the winter months. The ideal Geranium for winter use is the plant which has been kept steadily growing during summer, but has had every bud removed as soon as seen. Such a plant will bloom profusely from January to June.

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The Abutilon is an excellent winter bloomer. It has the twofold merit of having fine foliage and pretty flowers. It is commonly known as Flowering Maple, because of the striking resemblance of the foliage of most varieties to that of our native Sugar-Maple. It is sometimes known as Bell Flower, because of the shape of its pendent blossoms. It can hardly be called a profuse bloomer, but it is a constant one. In

color it ranges from pure white to dark crimson, scarlet, pink, and yellow. It is of comparatively rapid growth, and small plants soon becomes good-sized specimens. Its habit of growth is upright, and by judicious training it can be grown as a miniature tree that will always attract attention and challenge admiration, with its wealth of bright, glossy foliage, beneath which its bell-shaped flowers swing gracefully on their long, slender stems. Like the Geranium, it is almost entirely free from insects. This is a feature that will recommend it to those who have had to fight for the life of their plants against aphis, scale, mealy-bug, and red spider. Any plant strong and sturdy enough to take care of itself in this respect will commend itself to the woman who has had experience with insect enemies.

Among the flowering Begonias we have several varieties admirably adapted to winter use. The best of the list, in some respects, is *rubra*, with bright, coral-red flowers and luxuriant, dark-green foliage. I know of few plants that bloom more profusely and persistently. I have had plants of this variety that were not without flowers for periods of two and three years. They were out of blossom only when they were cut back and compelled to renew themselves by a vigorous development of new branches. The double-flowered kinds of recent introduction are very free bloomers, and their great clusters of carmine flowers show to superb effect against the rich, glossy green of their foliage. *Gloire de Lorraine* is another most charming variety. Small plants will be literally covered with flowers for many months. These flowers, which are of a bright rose color, are borne in wide-spreading panicles that droop over the pot and give the effect of having been trained to grow in pendent form, but it is the profusion of bloom that causes them to droop. This variety is far more floriferous than any other I have ever grown, and no well-regulated window-garden can afford to be without at least one specimen of it. Young, vigorous plants are now offered for sale each fall by nearly all florists, and these are the plants to depend upon for winter bloom. I would not advise the amateur to attempt growing this variety from cuttings, because he will fail ninety-nine times out of a hundred. But he may feel reasonably sure of success with plants grown to flowering size by florists who have a knowledge of the plant's requirements in the earlier stages of its development.

The *Heliotrope* is one of our most neglected flowers. But it always comes in for a great deal of admiration when well grown, and it can be grown very satisfactorily with but little trouble. It should be given a soil full of fibrous matter, with a good deal of sharp, coarse sand

worked into it—enough to make it so friable that a handful of it, after being squeezed together, will fall apart readily when pressure is relaxed. It should also be given considerable root-room. It will not grow or bloom when pot-bound. It should have a sunny place, and at no time should it be allowed to get dry at its roots. If it does, the plant will shortly shed its foliage. It has a multitude of thread-like roots which take up water rapidly, therefore it will be necessary to water it much oftener than you do such plants as the Geranium, which have but few roots, and these rather large ones. Kept moist at all times, and given plenty of sun, it will delight you with its clusters of deliciously fragrant flowers, ranging in color from nearly white to pale blue and dark purple. Cutting the flowers does this plant good, for whenever you clip off a cluster of bloom new branches immediately start on the stalk below, and these in a short time will bear flowers. By frequent pruning you can keep the plant growing throughout the entire season, and as long as it grows it will bloom if proper treatment is given in the manner already spoken of. It is a good plan to feed a spoonful of bonemeal once a month to each plant in an eight- or nine-inch pot.

The impression prevails to a surprising extent that the ordinary Fuchsia is a winter bloomer. Not one person in twenty growing it in the winter window-garden succeeds in coaxing a flower from it between January and April, but this failure does not enlighten them as to the true nature of the plant. The fact is that, with one or two exceptions, the Fuchsia is strictly a summer-flowering plant. It exhausts itself in summer and insists on resting in winter. This being the case, the best place for it, after completing the work of the season, is the cellar, and there it should be left until March, when it can be brought up and got into condition for another summer's work. But there are two or three varieties which bloom well in winter if not allowed to bloom in summer, and the best one of these is *speciosa*. This is, when properly managed, a most satisfactory winter-flowering plant. It is not as showy as many other varieties, but it has enough real beauty to recommend it to the attention of the lover of fine flowers. It is single. It has pinkish-white sepals and a bright carmine corolla. Its flowers are produced in great quantities at the extremity of the branches. They are pendent in habit and extremely graceful. Give the plant a light, porous soil, keep it well watered, and shower its foliage two or three times a week to prevent the red spider from doing it harm. Keep it away from strong sunshine. An east window suits it much better than a southern one. An east window, by the way, is an ideal one for Begonias.

Primula Obconica I consider one of our most desirable winter-flowering plants, because it requires very little care, and gives such a wealth of bloom in return for the slight attention bestowed upon it. About all it asks is plenty of water. We do not have to fight insects on it. We do not have to be particular as to the temperature of the room it grows in, providing we keep it above the frost-point. It seems utterly unmindful of the fluctuation of the living-room thermometer. Its flowers are sometimes almost white, but with a tint of rose or lavender showing in them, at other times decidedly pink. This is not the result of exposure to light, but is a peculiarity of the plant. The blossoms are always charming, with a wildwoodsy air that suggests *Hepaticas*, *Trilliums*, and *Spring Beauties*. The individual flower is about the size of a silver quarter, but there will almost always be from a dozen to twenty blossoms in each cluster at one time, and there will generally be several of these clusters from each plant, so the effect is a showy one. The foliage of the plant is produced in a thick mass, at the surface of the soil, and the flowers are thrown well above it on stalks six to eight inches long. This plant, like the *Heliotrope*, has a great mass of very fine roots, therefore it requires a great deal more water than the ordinary plant.

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A near relative of *Primula Obconica* is *Primula Forbesii*, better known as the "Baby Primrose," because of the dainty character of its diminutive flowers. This is a most charming plant,—a lovable plant, in fact,—and those who grow it one season will never willingly be without it thereafter, I venture to prophesy. It blooms all the time,—it would bloom the year round if we would let it,—and there are so many of its tiny flowers that we forget all about size in the consideration of quantity. Each plant is made up of several "crowns," or divisions, and each division generally has one or more flower-stalks in evidence. The flowers are produced in successive whorls on these slender stalks, and are of a rosy lilac color with a greenish-yellow eye. Water well.

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The good old Chinese Primrose deserves a place in all collections. It is one of the "stand-bys," blooming constantly and freely. It ranges in color from pure white to red, carmine, cherry, and violet. It requires only ordinary care, so far as soil and general attention is concerned, but you must be sure to pot it "high"—that is, to see that the crown of the plant is so far above the soil that water will not collect and stand about it. If water does collect there, decay almost invariable sets in, and that means the death of the plant in a short time. This plant does well in comparative shade, as does *Primula*

Obconica and the Baby Primrose. They are therefore well adapted to places which the larger plants in the window keep the sun from.

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The scarlet *Salvia* is fine for winter use if showered so frequently that the red spider cannot establish itself on it. I would advise taking a shoot from an old plant in the garden, just before frost comes. There will be plenty of these shoots, as a general thing, that can be separated from the parent plant in such a manner as to secure some good, strong roots with them. Pot them in a moderately rich soil. They will make rapid growth as soon as they become well established. Pinch them back from time to time to secure a bushy, compact development. By January you ought to have a good-sized plant, with many flowering points. When it puts forth its spikes of intensely vivid scarlet flowers you will find it a rival of the most brilliant *Geranium*, and those who have tired somewhat of the latter will consider it preferable in all respects, perhaps. Shower it all over at least twice a week,—once a day would be better,—and head off the red spider in this way. But neglect the shower-bath for a few days and you will find many yellowing leaves on the plant, and examination of the underside of them will show that the enemy has taken advantage of your negligence and established himself most thoroughly. It is much easier to keep him away altogether, by the liberal use of water from the beginning, than it is to get rid of him after he has obtained a foothold on the plant.

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The common single *Petunia* is a very satisfactory winter bloomer. You can always find plenty of good, strong seedlings in the bed in fall. Pot one of these, and it will soon develop into a fine specimen. It will begin to bloom when quite small, improving in all ways as it increases in size. A vigorous plant will often have as many as a hundred flowers on it at one time. After awhile it is well to cut the old branches back to within a few inches of the pot. Give the soil a spoonful of bonemeal when you do this, and in a short time new branches will put forth, and soon you will have a plant which has entirely renewed itself and begun to bloom again. Do not make the mistake of selecting double *Petunias* for winter use. They almost invariably fail to perfect their flowers in the living-room. If you have a particularly fine single variety which you would like to carry through the winter, root a cutting of it in sand, or take up the old plant, cutting it back to a mere stub at the time of potting. You will have to do one or the other of these things in order to make sure of getting what you want, as we cannot depend on seedlings coming

"true," as the florists say—that is, reproducing the exact characteristics of the parent plant. *Petunias* are admirably adapted for growing on brackets if their branches are allowed to droop over the pot and train themselves. They are more graceful when grown in this way, in the house, than when trained over a trellis, or tied to stiff supports.

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Browallia major is a comparatively new plant. It is of extremely easy culture. Those who are fond of blue flowers will prize it highly, as it is of a shade extremely rare among house-plants. It begins to bloom when quite small, but it is not until it grows to some size that it is at its best. It is grown from seed or cuttings. This, like the *Petunia*, is a fine bracket plant if allowed to train itself. It is also very effective as a basket plant.

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Another garden plant that can be strongly recommended for the winter window-garden is the *Ageratum*. Old plants which have done summer duty can be divided in late autumn, and each division will speedily develop into a fine plant from which you can expect flowers throughout the entire winter. The *Ageratum* is always a favorite with the lover of dainty flowers because of its exquisitely delicate lavender-blue color.

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Another excellent but little grown flower is *Plumbago capensis*. This is nearly of the same soft, beautiful color as the *Ageratum*, but here all resemblance between the two ends. The *Plumbago* frequently grows to be six and eight feet tall, and can be trained about a large window with charming effect. Its flowers are shaped like those of the annual *Phlox*, but are borne in loose spikes at the tip of the new branches. To keep it blooming, cut back the old growth now and then and feed the plant well to encourage constant development. As long as it grows it will bloom. It is to be wondered at that a plant of so much beauty is so little cultivated. The impression probably prevails that it is not an easy plant to manage, but such is not the case.

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Ten-Week Stock—the "Gillyflower" of our grandmothers—is another garden flower that can be made good use of in the house in winter. Take up the smallest of your plants just before cold weather comes. Cut away most of the top, leaving about eight inches of the main stalks, with stubs of branches. Pot it in ordinary garden loam, water it well, and put it in a shady place until it becomes established in its new quarters and shows signs of growth. Then remove to a light but cool place. For rooms where there is no fire-heat, but are frost-proof, it is one of the best plants we can select, as it will bloom con-

stantly and profusely. Its flowers, which are very lasting in quality, are borne in spikes six or eight inches long. They come in red, mauve, lilac, pale yellow, and pure white. Their fragrance closely resembles that of the *Carnation*.

The *Marguerite Carnation* as a garden flower is a comparative failure, because it seldom comes into full bloom before cold weather puts an end to it. But if plants having double flowers of fine color are potted in late October they will continue to bloom throughout the winter in the window-garden and give nearly as much satisfaction as the greenhouse varieties of *Carnation*. Their flowers are smaller, as a general thing, than those of the greenhouse sorts, but frequently they are quite as double and nearly always as fragrant, and they have the merit of seldom splitting the calyx. Care must be taken to shower the plant frequently and liberally, as the red spider delights to work on it in a dry atmosphere. This *Carnation* likes a cool room, and can be grown with *Ten-Week Stock* in windows some distance from the living-room fire. Try a few plants of it this season and you will be sure to include it in your list in future. It will give you a dozen blossoms where you would get one from the greenhouse sorts.

The *Azalea* is a favorite plant for winter-flowering, and its popularity is richly deserved. Well-grown specimens will be literally covered with flowers of most lovely shades of red, rose, cherry, and pure white, some single, some double—all beautiful. They last for weeks if kept in a cool temperature. The room that suits the *Ten-Week Stock* and the *Marguerite Carnation* will suit this plant perfectly, therefore the three make a fine combination for cool but sunny windows.

No winter window-garden collection can be considered complete nowadays if it does not include such bulbs as the *Holland* and *Roman Hyacinths*, *Lilium Harrisii*, and several varieties of *Narcissus*. These can be potted in October and November, put away in a dark, cool place to form roots, and left there until the first of January or later. Bring them out when the top has begun to push up, and they will soon make vigorous growth under the combined influence of warmth and light. Plants potted in the months named ought to come into bloom in February.

It must not be understood by the reader that because I do not extend the list I have made mention of all kinds of plants which I consider

desirable for winter use where flowers are demanded. But I have named those I consider most likely to afford satisfaction to the amateur. There are many kinds which the experienced gardener can coax into bloom which the amateur would fail utterly with, and these I do not think it worth while to say anything about in this connection.

There are many plants having fine foliage which can be grown to excellent advantage with flowering ones. Their leaves will admirably supplement the beauty of the blossoms, and there *may* be times when they will have to be depended on to make the window-garden attractive. I would advise including several plants of the Madame Salleroi Geranium, with its green and white foliage, Begonias *argentea guttata*, olive and dull red, with silvery white spots, and *maculata aurea*, gold-spotted and blotched on a dark green mound, and *anthericum variegatum*, a plant having grass-like foliage of pale green striped with pure white. These are all easily grown. Their foliage is almost as attractive as flowers, and they will do much to brighten up the window-garden when there are few flowers in it.

Before closing this paper it may be well to give a few general directions about the care of plants grown for winter flowering. In late fall we seldom have much sunshine, and evaporation of moisture from the soil will be slow. Our plants at this season will, for the most part, be making very little growth, and a plant not growing actively is not in a condition to need much water. Therefore we must be careful to give only enough to keep the soil moderately moist. It should never be wet. If we were to water freely at this time, a souring of the soil would most likely take place, and this would result in a diseased condition of the roots, from which the plant might not recover. As soon as sunny weather sets in and the plants begin to make a vigorous growth the supply of water can be increased. Let the increase be in proportion to the development of the plant.

Plants not making much growth are in no need of a fertilizer, because they are not in a condition to assimilate it. The application of one at such times will do great harm. Wait until they begin to grow, and then apply it. Give it in small quantities at first, and increase it from time to time as the condition of the plant warrants. But never give enough to bring about a forced growth. Aim always and only to secure healthy development. A plant forced into rapid growth is never a healthy one, remember. It will lack the vitality necessary to carry it through the working period successfully.

Give all the fresh air you can. Open doors and windows at some distance from your plants on pleasant days, and give your plants a chance to breathe in pure oxygen in liberal quantity. Give all the sunshine you can. And aim to keep the temperature of the room between seventy degrees by day and fifty-five at night. It will probably exceed

these figures in both directions, but try to regulate it in such a way as to avoid the extremes of intense heat and dangerous cold.

Use water liberally on the foliage of your plants. By washing off the dust, it keeps open the pores of the leaves through which they breathe, and it tempers the hot, dry atmosphere usually prevailing in the living-room. The only way to modify this condition is to keep water constantly evaporating on stove or register and make frequent use of the sprayer.



TWILIGHT

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

'T WIXT a smile and a tear,
'Twixt a groan and a sigh,
'Twixt the day and the dark,
When the night draweth nigh,
Ah, sunshine may fade
From the heavens above;
No twilight have we
To the day of our love.



AFTERGLOW

BY MARY FINDLATER

L ONG since I called you Sun, and Star, and Sweet,
A score of lover's names; but "Folly dies
With Youth," said I, and dead love cannot rise;
Yet at the place where once we used to meet
It chanced that you drove past me in the street;
I saw your face, once more I met your eyes,
A glow lit up the sombre winter skies,
My heart beat quicker than your horse's feet.

And should you pass me thus, though I were old,
Though all the story of our love were done,
My heart would glow again, O Star, O Sun;
As mountain summits, lone and white and cold,
Touched by the light a million miles away
Will blush and burn until the end of Day.

FINAL SELECTION

By Gay Bentley Wuerpel



IN some parts of the Southwest at the time of this story the word "restaurant" on a sign-board would have been considered a lynching matter. Hence, the tamale man's advertisement was inscribed in plain English and familiar Spanish: "Eating-house; Hot Tamales, Chile con Carne, and Frijoles." And to the manufacture of those border delicacies every faculty of his heart and mind was consecrated—at least, until Carmen crossed his path; thereafter the business of a livelihood was but an automatic performance with him.

Some days, feeling her heart vaguely stirred by the timid worship in his brown eyes, Carmen would remain after meals to dry his dishes while he washed them; after which they would betake themselves to the little porch, she to sing "Te volvi á ver," while he, listening rapturously, picked her accompaniment on the guitar. On other days she told herself that she could never love a man for whom she had to work; that work made her sober and dull, as it had made him. Then she would disdainfully fling aside his dish-towel, leaving him to follow her to the door to gaze sorrowfully after her as she went down the dusty road towards home.

One day—one of those paradisiacal days that she remained to dry his dishes and sing for him—she, feeling too indolent to sing, listened dreamily while he, tilted back in a chair against the wall and taking in every detail of her soft, olive face with yearning eyes, picked "Te volvi á ver" in a meditative manner on the guitar.

Suddenly there was a clatter of approaching horse-hoofs on the road, and a cowboy, reining up in a cloud of dust, flung himself out of the saddle and swaggered jauntily—a little mincingly on high boot-heels—towards the porch. He was a fine-looking young fellow, a tall, slim, and sunburned blond, a striking contrast to the rather weazen, brown little tamale man. And as he came forward Carmen looked at him with admiring interest, thinking she had never listened to a pleasanter sound than the clink of his spurs and the flip-flip of his leather fringes. He paused at the step with a bright, blue-eyed stare at her.

"Muy buenos dias, Señora," said he, sweeping off his hat with the grandiloquence of a hidalgo.

"Señorita," she corrected, lowering her long lashes.

He stared with redoubled admiration, and so persistently that a lovely embarrassment—half pleasure—reddened her cheeks.

The tamale man took quick note of the blush, and his heart filled with apprehension. Carmen had never blushed for him! But, making no sign, for the Mexican is—to outward appearances, at least—a sphinx, he waited at the door in polite expectation for the cowboy to follow.

"Come he'p me eat, Señorita," commanded the young fellow breezily.

She followed him inside, after some coquettish show of hesitation, and took her seat opposite him at one of the little tables.

"Bring grub fur two, Mexico—or whatever's your name. I'm stan'in' treat fur the Señorita," he called out genially as he whipped out a showy bandana pocket-handkerchief and carefully flecked off a settling of dust in her plate and cup and saucer.

The tamale man performed the obligation politely, but with an oppressed heart. He compassed them about with little dishfuls of all that his kitchen supplied; after which he retired to the back-ground to furtively watch the newcomer.

"Gee! but them tamales look bully! How long've you bin hyur, Señorita?" inquired the cowboy with loud affability as he proceeded to satisfy a ravenous appetite.

"She leef in Texas seex moanths," said the tamale man.

"That so? Don't she talk no 'Merikin? No sabe 'Mericano, Señorita?"

"Muy poco—one leetle beet," she replied with an enchanting smile. "Heem"—pointing to the tamale man—"sabe mas porque; heem leef in Texas mucho tiempo."

"Si; I leef in Texas two years," he said.

"I ain't carin' nothin' 'bout him," said the cowboy slightly, with admiring eyes fastened on her face.

The tamale man prayed devoutly that he would soon be leaving for other parts, according to the vagrant habits of cowboys.

"How long you es-stay in the town, Señor?" he inquired finally, in as off-hand a manner as he could assume.

"Wal—I dunno; depends on how I like the lady-folks in these hyur diggin's," said the cowboy with a languishing look at Carmen. "I'm a lady's-man I'm hyur to tell you!"

"I haive never hear of a lady-man," remarked the tamale man simply.

"I never neither, Mexico, 'cep'n them bearded ladies in dime shows, an' them's what I call man-ladies. What I said was lady's-man—man what all the lafies loves, you know."

"Ah, si," murmured the tamale man. "Do all the ladies they loaves you, Señor?"

"Wal—leastwise they all say they do," said the cowboy with a self-complacent smirk, "but mos' ladies is plum flirts, ain't they, Señorita?"

She shook her head uncomprehendingly, whereupon he proceeded laboriously to explain, saying at the finish, "Air you one of them flirts, Señorita?"

The tamale man's eyes flashed.

"No, Señor!" he cried, his voice quite choked with feeling about the matter, "Carmen she no tell the people she loaves that who she no loaves. Carmen she——"

"Aw, say now, Mexico, don't git so almighty uppety. Mos' ladies thinks it's mighty nice to git a *chance* to be called flirts. But I'm glad the Señorita ain't one of them kind, fur when I admire a lady an' mean business, I want her to mean business too, an' don't you forgit it!"

"Meaning business" in that instance was to the tamale man's limited English an obscurity of speech that occasioned him no alarm, though he did think with increasing anxiety that the cowboy was dawdling unnecessarily long over his dinner.

But the cowboy was a gentleman of irresponsible leisure. He lingered until the hot mid-day sun had settled into the pensive glow of late afternoon. And when he did finally go it was as Carmen's escort home—Carmen mounted artlessly behind him on the mustang pony and clutching him tightly about the waist, while he, hugely enjoying the situation, urged the pony to its roughest gait.

The tamale man watched them out of sight. Then—for murderous thoughts sometimes beset the best of human nature—he cursed the cowboy with all the picturesque eloquence of his mother-tongue.

Next day the cowboy accompanied Carmen to her meals, and that his infatuation had grown apace was evident from his lover-like and monopolizing attentions.

The tamale man saw too that she was glad to be monopolized. But hope, once inspired, is tenacious of life, even in the heart of a timid lover. So, guitar in hand, he intercepted her as she was leaving after dinner with the cowboy.

"Wilt thou sing 'Te volvi á ver'?" he asked beseechingly in their native tongue.

"No, no; me no kin seeng," said she, with a sidelong glance at the cowboy.

"Chune up, Mexico, an' less see ef she cain't," he answered promptly.

The tamale man's dog-like eyes looked at her in silent supplication. And delighted at heart to sing for the cowboy, she sank compliantly—not without a hypocritical little sigh of resignation—down

on the step, while the tamale man twanged the preliminary chords of "Te volvi á ver."

The cowboy gazed at her with enamoured eyes, chewing vigorously the while. When the song was finished he lifted his chin and spat deftly over her head.

"Them Mexkin words was too many fur me, Señorita," said he, but you look powerful sweet a-singin'. Ain't that so, Mexico?"

"Si," the tamale man answered gloomily.

Carmen glanced at him in disdain. Then, with a shrug characteristically Mexican, she left the porch and sauntered down the road, having first, he noted with a spasm of jealousy, thrown a smilingly inviting look over her shoulder to the cowboy, who followed precipitately.

"Haive you a—a—ess your rancho vairy far from the town, Señor?" he cried hastily, seizing upon any expedient wherewith to prevent the cowboy from overtaking her. But the cowboy was not to be beguiled.

"I ain't got no time to tell you 'bout my rancho now, Mexico. I'm calculatin' on tellin' the Señorita 'bout it an' givin' her a' invite to consider it her'n," he called back over his shoulder.

Days followed—days that moved heavily for the tamale man. Carmen ignored him frankly, and he, neglected and lone as a wolf, went about his duties with much composure of manner, but with a drawn face he could not dissemble.

At length the blow fell. It was one day after the eating-house was cleared of patrons, while Carmen and the cowboy dawdled as usual over their dinner. The tamale man was advancing towards them with frijoles, the inevitable finish-off of a Mexican dinner.

"Mexico," said the cowboy, "give us your blessin'; me an' Carmen's goin' to git married t'-morrer."

The tamale man clutched the plate tighter and made an ineffectual effort to steady his shaking knees.

"You bet!" continued the cowboy, "t'-morrer I take this hyur little black-eyed gal fur sooner or better, as the sayin' is. Then we'll strike a bee-line fur the ranch, which'll haf to be our marriage-tower, as I'm 'bout busted at present. But I'm lowin' to sell a couple o' hund'ed fine steers poco tiempo—what's the matter, man!"

The tamale man, unable to frame the question into words, could only look it at Carmen, and her drooping eyes and love-laden sigh answered it. Then he turned with an air of blind emotion to the little porch. As he stood there, staring blankly down the road, she and the cowboy came out. She was clinging in utter fondness to his arm and wiping her lips with his bandana handkerchief.

"Give me thy good wishes," she said in Spanish to the discarded one.

And he, with a great despair in his face, commended her to the Holy Mother, then turned abruptly inside and bowed his head down on one of the little tables and wept with all the hopeless misery of his heart.

That night while she knelt at her bedside, telling her beads, the twang of a guitar came faintly to her ears, rising and falling sobbingly on the wind. It was "Te volvi á ver."

When the tamale man had played to his mournful satisfaction he replaced the guitar in its green baize bag and laid it reverently away. Then he retired to the porch step in the darkness and sat himself down to a suffering both simple and deep.

The sunrise of next morning found him still there, to all appearances heavily sunk in sleep, but a sound of tramping footsteps on a strip of plank sidewalk close by caused him to lift his head and stare with swollen eyes at a curious spectacle. It was that of the cowboy—his supplanter in Carmen's affections—proceeding with due celerity up the road, escorted on either side by an officer of the law. Those gentlemen, wearing cheerful but business-like countenances, had each an arm linked within his, and he, seeming in nowise downcast by the doubtful position, saluted the tamale man with his usual loud cheerfulness.

"Hello, thur, Mexico! Come take a wing!" he called back over his shoulder.

As the little procession continued up the road the tamale man stared after it in a dazed, dreamy way, with the events of yesterday lingering confusedly in his memory—in that half-paralyzed state, indeed, between sleep and wakefulness.

The road led to the county jail, a small, unofficial-looking structure at the other end of town. When this stronghold was reached the Sheriff, acting also in the capacity of jailer, unlocked the door and motioned the cowboy inside.

"Wal, gent'men," drawled he, with something like a dry grin, "I don't see no way out'n it, less'n I take my bootheels to them winders."

The Sheriff and his deputy smiled in a non-committal way and withdrew, locking the door behind them. And some moments later, when the tamale man peered through the wooden bars, he beheld the cowboy seated upon a goods-box, idly flipping his fingers against his bootheel.

"Hello, thur, ol' sobersides, that you?" said he, looking up serenely when the tamale man's shadow fell athwart the sunshine.

"Yais, eet ees me. How coame?" said the tamale man, eying him solemnly, his own face marked with the previous night's suffering.

"I come 'scorted by the law; that's how I come!"

"What you come fur?"

"'Cause I had to, by jings!"

"What the Sheriff he say you haive doan?"

"Said I stole 'nother feller's steers. Said he had a warrant fur my 'rest—an' hyur I rest!"

"Did you stole the oather man's steers?"

"Ef I was you, I wouldn't bust loose with them kind of questions, Mexico; you air liable to git hurt," said the cowboy with great deliberation.

"Haive you tell Carmen?" queried the tamale man anxiously.

"Carmen she seen me tuk up, an' she's plum loony, pore little gal!" The tamale man sighed heavily.

"An' she's liable to be broke up a consider'ble long time, as I don't see nary a prospec' of gittin' out soon. I ain't got a red cent—handy, else'n I'd——"

A pause followed, in which he looked at the tamale man with narrowed, speculative eyes. "Say!" he said finally, "why cain't *you* loan a feller a few dollars to git out on?"

"You ain't pay me fur the eatin' what you geet at my——"

"Haw, that's all right!" interrupted the delinquent cheerfully, "I'll pay fur that soon's I c'n git out an' c'llect what's owin' me. What I'm figurin' on now is to git out fur Carmen's sake." He knew the track around the tamale man. "You bet! I cain't bear to think of that pore little gal a-bustin' her heart out over yander, an', what's more, I know you cain't—an', by jings! Carmen *she* knows you cain't!"

The tamale man held up his hands in distressful ejaculation. "I have not one peso—nada, nada!" he cried.

"No, I never 'lowed you had no spot cash on hand, but—er—I heared that other eatin'-house keeper 'crost town the other day offer you a hund'ed dollars down fur your eatin'-house, 'sides offer'n you wages—bully good wages!—to learn him how to make tamales. 'Course, now, ef you was to git that hund'ed dollars an' loan it to me—I mean Carmen—I'd pay it back pretty pronto, an' you'd be a doin' it fur her."

The tamale man stood with an expression of suspense in his melancholy dark eyes.

"Si, si; I haive furgeet that man. When I haive thees pain here"—pressing his hand spasmodically against his heart—"I no haive memoria fur nada—fur nada. I go thees momento an' see that man."

"You're a bully good dago!"

"An' I see the lawyer——"

"You bet! an' git the smoothes' talkin' one in town—so's you won't lose your money, you know."

"An' I say fur heem geet you out fur—fur Carmen."

So overcome was he at the thought of the meanwhile suffering

Carmen that he turned abruptly and tearfully away, with a love that was ready and glad for any self-sacrifice!

The upshot was that the case against the cowboy was expeditiously disposed of. The lawyer's ready tongue gave the allegation against him the lie, and he lost no time in repossessing himself of his pony and starting forth at a jaunty pace to where Carmen in gay attire, ready for her wedding journey, awaited him.

"Wal, my little gal's all primped up to start, I see. Whur you a-goin', Mexico, on that rabbit-year'd burro o' your'n?"

"I go to the cross-roads weeth Carmen," answered the tamale man quietly. And as they moved out towards the great, wide-reaching prairie he gazed into Carmen's face with mingled worship and despair.

"Hate to see me tote her off, don't you, Mexico?" said the cowboy with an observant glance at him.

Carmen glanced down at him with a tremulous little smile, her soft nature dissolved in pity for him. "I feel like cry tambien," she said, with two little tears trickling down her cheeks.

Then, his generous heart recoiling from saddening her happiness, he mustered a brave smile.

Too soon the cross-roads were reached, and the cowboy jerked the mustang on its haunches.

"Wal, hyur we air, Mexico. We'll haf to say adios now an' move on, fur the Catholic preacher lives consider'ble off'n the trail to the ranch, an' hit'll take us till plum dark to—hyur, you! who tol' you you could do that?"

In an inconceivably short time the tamale man had slipped off the little donkey's back and stood with outstretched hands to Carmen, who had just leaned over and dropped a butterfly kiss on his forehead. The touch of that kiss—light caress though it was, and, as he knew, no more than an indemnification to be received for the suffering he had been put to—filled him with uncontrollable agitation.

"Ay—caramba!" he cried in the anguish of his despair. "Eef you no be good to Carmen—my Carmencita!—I steeck a knife in your heart like thees!" He flung out an arm and brought it against his breast with melodramatic intensity.

"That's right, ol' hoss!" shouted the cowboy between loud guffaws of laughter. "Ef I'm mean to this little gal, by jings! I give you lief to ketch me an' carve me into tamales!"

Touching the pony's flanks with his spurs, they set off in a mild lope across the prairie.

As the cowboy bore her away with him, Carmen cast jerky glances behind her at the receding eating-house, abandoned and forlorn, and at the tamale man pursuing his way back to town, his sombrero pulled over his eyes and his head bent low over the little donkey, that, trudging

patiently along under its burden, seemed to share its master's desolation of spirit.

As the distance between her and these dear familiars increased a heavy melancholy settled down on her heart. And through her tears the eating-house, the tamale man, and his donkey were lost in a blur of green grass and blue sky.

Suddenly a raucous, ear-splitting, reëchoing bray rent the air. An answering sob burst from Carmen's lips—the enchantment was broken!

"Why-y!" exclaimed the cowboy jocosely, turning in his saddle, "what's the little gal a-boohoooin' 'bout? Homesick a'ready?"

Vouchsafing him no answer, not even a look, she jerked frantically at the bridle. "Es-stop heem! Mek heem es-stop! Lemme geet down off!" The exigency of her tone admitted of no stopping to parley; not waiting, indeed, until the pony could be brought to a halt, she slipped to the ground, stumbling weakly to her knees in her excitement; then, gathering herself up, she broke into a swift run towards the tamale man.

"Juan! Juan! Ay, Juan—mi vida!" she shrieked, her voice rising to a high pitch of anguish.

The tamale man turned slowly and stared wonderingly. Then, slipping off the little donkey's back, he advanced towards her with outstretched arms and reeling gait.

And over the audacious spirit of the cowboy—sitting sidewise in his saddle and staring with amazement—dawned the humbling conviction that Carmen had come to the real—the proper—understanding of her heart.



WHO HATH NOT FACED?

BY CHESTER FIRKINS

QUEER puppets in Life's little to and fro,
Huddling in hunger of companionship,
Blindly we go, because the others go,
From Birth's bright dawn to Death's autumnal grip.

But in the long, cold corridors of Night,
Wakened as by the grieving wind's wild moan,
Who hath not faced his soul's grim eremite
And learned how utterly he was alone?

THE RETURN OF SISTER JULIANA

By Ella Middleton Tybout

Author of "Ananias of Poketown," etc.



SISTER JULIANA JACKSON was about to enter the Valley of the Shadow. She lay motionless upon the one highly prized feather bed of the establishment, closely covered with the best patchwork quilt. Outside the mercury wavered uncertainly between ninety and ninety-five degrees, but when one is preparing to renounce earthly treasures forever, one is surely entitled to the best the house affords regardless of temperature. Sister Juliana realized this, and had herself commanded her transfer from corn-husk to feathers when her hours were pronounced numbered.

On her right sat her husband, somewhat self-conscious in the dignity of his position as chief mourner; on her left was her pastor, ready at any moment with an appropriate text or a few words of prayer; at the foot of the bed crouched old Aunt Judy; and at the head stood Sister Roxy Bristow, waving a large turkey-feather fan to and fro with a slow, rhythmical movement.

"Sistah Juliana," said the pastor anxiously, "how does yo' feel in yo' sperrit, Sistah Juliana?"

Not even the quiver of an eyelid betrayed that the recumbent figure understood his remark. Her husband leaned forward and took her hand in his, but it fell limp and nerveless from his grasp. Mrs. Bristow immediately restored it to its former position.

"Hit am mo' fittin', Brothah Jackson," she said severely, "fo' a soul tuh go tuh glory wid de ahms crossed pious-like on de breas' den tuh let 'em meandah all ovah de baid."

Brother Jackson groaned heavily in response.

"Take me wid yo', Juliana," he entreated earnestly, "take me wid yo'."

Old Aunt Judy raised her quavering voice in indignant protest.

"Don' yo' do hit, Juliana," she cried quickly. "Git away tuh glory 'thout no triflin' niggahs hangin' tuh yo' petticoats. Git off by yo'se'f, honey, when yo' kin; don' yo' make no mistake 'bout dat."

"Aun' Judy," remonstrated the pastor sadly, "whut yo' done say

am empty wo'ds. Sistah Juliana ain' gwine tuh have no petticuts in de Noo Jerooselum fuh nobody tuh hang on tuh."

"Take me wid yo', Juliana," repeated the sorrowing husband, "I wants tuh git in too."

"Tain't noways likely yo's gwine tuh git in ef yo' don' go wid huh," muttered Aunt Judy unkindly.

"Brothah Reese," interposed Mrs. Bristow hastily, "kain't yo' light de way fuh Sistah Juliana wid de lamp o' prayah?"

"I done set huh gropin' soul on de straight an' narrah way twiet in de las' houah, Sistah Roxy," responded Brother Reese huskily, "an' meh mouf do feel pow'ful dry an' pa'ched-like fo' sho'."

It appeared to be a matter of indifference to Sister Juliana whether her way was lighted by prayer or darkened by neglect.

"In de kitchin," suggested Mr. Jackson in properly subdued accents, "dey's cookin' de funeral ham. Reckon yo' mought step out an' see whut mo' yo' kin find, Brothah Reese."

And Brother Reese stepped out with some celerity.

"Brothah Jackson," said Mrs. Bristow softly, "I feels fo' yo', Brothah Jackson."

"I knows yo' does, Sistah Roxy," he replied gratefully.

An almost imperceptible movement stirred the surface of the patch-work quilt, and both watchers concentrated their attention upon it for a moment.

"De rus'le o' de Daith Angil," whispered Mrs. Bristow, with a long sweep of her fan; "he done huvvah ovah Sistah Juliana dat time."

"He flap he wings an' pass huh by onct mo'," returned Mr. Jackson in awe-struck tones, and again they lapsed into silence, while Aunt Judy raised her head and gazed intently at the bed.

"I's gwine tuh be pow'ful lonely," said Mr. Jackson at last, with a heavy sigh.

"Dat's so, Brothah Jackson, dat's so," agreed Mrs. Bristow sympathetically, "but hit am de will o' Gawd. I done been lonely mehse'f dis long time, sence Jake tuck an' got hisse'f drownend in de Pigeon Run."

"Hit don' seem," said Mr. Jackson thoughtfully, "ez ef de watah in de Run wuh deep 'nuff tuh drown Jake nohow."

"Ef yo's too drunk tuh git outen a mud-puddle, I reckon yo' mought git drownend ef yo' nose wuh in de mud," returned Mrs. Bristow somewhat shortly, but as though the subject did not interest her personally.

"I kin fry yo' bacon fuh yo' ev'ry mo'nin'," she volunteered, after a slight pause. "Yo kin git it ovah de fence."

"Yo's pow'ful thoughtful, Sistah Roxy," he responded sadly; "hit am lucky de gyahdens jines at de back."

"Yo' mought take down some o' de fence so's I kin run in an' out an' keep yo' house clean," she suggested further.

"Yo' sho' am gwine tuh be a comfo't tuh a lonely widdah-man, Sistah Roxy," he returned appreciatively.

Again there was a slight movement of the quilt, and again they watched breathlessly for the flight of the spirit of Sister Juliana, which, however, still clung tenaciously to its house of clay.

Brother Jackson wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead and glanced over his shoulder at the door communicating with the kitchen, whence came appetizing odors and the subdued hum of many voices.

"I done been settin' on dis hyah stool sence airly mo'nin'," he remarked plaintively.

"Yo sho' done yo' bes' tuh make de passin' easy fuh Sistah Juliana," returned Mrs. Bristow warmly; "'tain't many men kin set so quiet at a time like dis hyah. Dey mos'ly gits rampageous when de ham begins tuh bile."

"Don' yo' speechify 'bout hams," he said mournfully. "Juliana set sich stock on 'em dat de grunt o' de pig am like tuh bus' meh haht, Sistah Roxy."

Sister Roxy waved her fan mechanically and glanced about the apartment in a proprietary manner.

"Dem wax-flowahs hadn' ought tuh set so close tuh de windah nohow," she remarked irrelevantly; "de sun done melt de watah-lily scan'lous."

"Yo' kin change de place, Sistah Roxy," replied Mr. Jackson obligingly; "ack ez ef de house wuh your'n, an' do jes' whut yo' zires," and Mrs. Bristow smiled as though satisfied as she moved the glass case of waxen blossoms to the other side of the room.

"I feels faint-like and hollah inside," resumed the gentleman after a long silence. "Dis am a mighty sad 'casion fuh me, Sistah Roxy, an' meh haht am soon gwine tuh be ez empty ez meh stummick, but hit am de will o' Gawd, ez yo' done 'pinionate, Sistah."

"De stummick," remarked the lady reflectively, "kin git filled up an' easy-like ag'in. How 'bout de haht, Brothah Jackson, how 'bout de haht?"

"Sistah Roxy," he returned sorrowfully, "will yo' walk home wid me f'om de grave when we lays Juliana away? I's gwine tuh need de suppo't o' frien's ez well ez 'ligion tuh keep me up, Sistah."

"Brothah Jackson," she responded, with evident appreciation of the compliment, "yo' kin lean on me ef yo' so zires. I's gwine tuh he'p yo' beah up undah yo' 'fiction, Brothah Jackson."

"Sistah Roxy," he replied gallantly, "come wid me tuh de kitchin. Yo' an' me has done set hyah dis long time wotchin' fuh de Daith

Angil tuh light on Juliana. Yo' mus' be tired an' hongry, 'caze yo' done fan huh long an' faithful. Lemme conduc' yo' tuh de kitchin, Sistah Roxy. Aun' Judy kin wotch out fuh de flies."

Had the patient watchers looked behind them as they transferred the fan to Aunt Judy and made a hasty exit, they might have observed that Sister Juliana's eyes had opened and were fixed upon them with the expression of one who contemplates earthly rather than heavenly transactions.

"Juliana," whispered Aunt Judy, bending close over the bed, "does yo' see him, Juliana?"

But the heavy eyelids dropped wearily as though to shut out forever all unwelcome sights.

"She done move yo' flowahs, honey," continued the old woman; "she tuck an' move yo' flowahs f'om de place yo' done s'lected. Does yo' hyah me, Juliana?"

Juliana, however, still remained indifferent to transitory things.

"Dey done kill yo' raid roostah," resumed Aunt Judy eagerly, "an' de ole speckled hen too, tuh bile fuh de funeral dinnah. Dey done got yo' mos' buried, honey. Does yo' hyah me, Juliana? He am up tuh he same ole tricks; dey ain' a mo' flirtatious niggah in Poketown den Jeremiah Jackson."

Aunt Judy paused for breath and gazed intently at the motionless figure.

"Don' yo' go, Juliana," she continued insistently, "don' yo' give dat no-'count niggah no chance tuh shake de free laig ag'in."

Encouraged by a slight quiver of the eyelid, Aunt Judy went on breathlessly:

"Does yo' zire Roxy Bristow tuh set up in yo' house an' fry yo' bacon? Is yo' gwine tuh 'low huh tuh move yo' flowahs an' 'dulse in chaste conversation wid yo' husban' ovah yo' haid? Come back an' spite 'em, Juliana. Come back, honey! I knows yo' kin, 'caze yo' time ain' come yit; I knows hit by de Almanac. Come back, I tells yo'! Juliana, does yo' hyah me? *Juliana!*"

The door opened suddenly to admit Brother Reese, who entered with the sleek and unctuous manner of one who has dined to repletion upon greasy but highly satisfactory viands. He was followed by a mixed assembly of neighbors who had been assisting in the preparation of the funeral meats, and finally by Brother Jackson and Sister Roxy, who at once resumed their former positions.

"Sistah Juliana," inquired Brother Reese with interest, "has yo' gone home, Sistah Juliana?"

"Take me wid yo', Juliana," said Mr. Jackson, returning mechanically to his former appeal, with the air of one who knows the proper thing to say under the circumstances.

"Say a few wo'ds tuh help us all, Brothah Reese," urged Mrs. Bristow, taking possession of the fan; "we's all got tuh follah aftah Sistah Juliana some day. Light de dahk way, Brothah, light de dahk way."

"Meh frien's," said Brother Reese, rising and spreading his hands out over the bed, "yo' sees befo' yo' a soul bustin' f'om a sinful body. De body am de dus' o' de yearth; de soul am de clouds o' de aiah."

"Amen, dat's so," agreed Mrs. Bristow emphatically.

"Some clouds," continued Brother Reese earnestly, "am black, an' some am w'ite, same ez some skins am black an' some am w'ite. De good folks has de w'ite souls an' de bad folks has de black, no mattah whut skin dey had tuh begin wid."

"Glory, glory, hallelolah!" shouted Mrs. Bristow triumphantly.

"Hit ain' fuh me tuh say whut am de colah o' Sistah Juliana's soul," resumed the preacher sadly; "she wuh mo' apt tuh set tuh home den go tuh chu'ch; she done cook an' wuck roun' de house on de Day o' Res'; an' she tuhnh huh yeah frequent tuh de 'ticemints o' ole Satan, but I hopes huh soul am w'ite. Y-a-a-s, good Lawd, I hopes huh soul am w'ite."

Quite overcome by his own eloquence, Brother Reese paused dramatically and mopped his forehead, evidently forgetting that the soul of Sister Juliana still lingered in its earthly habitation.

"Sistah Roxy," he commanded pompously, "keep de flies offen de co'pse, Sistah Roxy."

The eyes of Sister Juliana slowly opened a second time.

"I ain' daid yit," she said quietly.

The effect of this assertion upon the assembled company was somewhat paralyzing. Brother Reese, however, immediately recovered his self-possession.

"Repent, Sistah Juliana," he cried loudly; "de Lawd done give yo' dis little time longah tuh spachiate yo' sins. Now's yo' chance, Sistah Juliana, now's yo' chance."

"A-a-amen!" chorussed the excited neighbors, who now filled the little room almost to the point of suffocation.

Sister Juliana turned her troubled eyes towards the kitchen door.

"Yo' done lef' de tea-kittle on de fiah 'thout no watah, an' hit am gwine tuh bus' ef yo' ain' cyahful," she said feebly, and, indeed, an odor of red-hot iron permeated the apartment.

"Juliana," cried Aunt Judy hysterically. "Yo' done hyah me, Juliana. Praise de Lawd!"

"Dis ain' no 'casion tuh think 'bout kittles, Sistah Juliana," remonstrated the preacher; "let yo' las' wo'ds be fuh de husban' who done wotch an' pray by yo' dis long time."

"Ain' yo' got no wo'd fuh me, Juliana?" inquired that gentleman pathetically.

Sister Juliana caught weakly at the feathers of the fan as it passed annoyingly close to her nose.

"Stop dat!" she commanded irritably, and Mrs. Bristow paused in astonishment.

"Lawd," entreated Brother Reese fluently as he dropped upon his knees, "reach out yo' ahms tuh dis po', flutterin' l'il soul. Hit am on'y a po', weak female woman, good Lawd, yo' knows dat. She done fall by de wayside maybe, but of co'se she kain't be strong tuh zist ole Satan like a man am strong."

"Lis'en tuh dem wo'ds, good Lawd," interpolated the sorrowful husband.

"She ain' gwine tuh have de ahm o' huh husban' tuh suppoht huh thu' de Noo Jerooselum," continued Brother Reese fervently, "she am on'y——"

"Say 'Amen,'" interrupted Sister Juliana irreverently as she sat upright in her bed and glared inhospitably at her uninvited guests, "say 'Amen' quick, now, an' git up offen yo' knees."

"Huh mine do wandah," said Brother Reese charitably as he rose obediently. "Prepare fuh de wuss, Brothah Jackson, prepare fuh de wuss. De houah am come. Lawd, open de Golden Gate an' let dis sinnah in."

Sister Juliana pointed with trembling finger to the outer door.

"Yo' mought ez well go home," she remarked to her astonished neighbors, "dey ain' gwine tuh be no funeral in dis hyah house yit a-whiles."

"Juliana," cried Aunt Judy joyfully, "yo's back ag'in fo' sho', honey."

One by one the guests departed silently, omitting the customary farewell to the hostess.

"Reckon yo' mought ez well light out wid 'em," suggested that lady to her pastor, who shook his head mournfully as he complied with the request.

Sister Juliana then turned to her husband, resolution in her whole attitude.

"Put back dem wax flowahs," she commanded quietly.

"Jes' ez yo' zires, Juliana, jes' ez yo' zires, honey," he replied, hastening to obey her mandate.

"Good-by, Sistah Roxy," she murmured, sinking wearily down in her feather bed; "Aun' Judy kin show yo' de way outen de *front* do'. Sistah Roxy, yo' needn' trubble yo'se'f 'bout no back fence; we's gwine tuh move 'cross de bridge next month anyhow. Aun' Judy, open de front do' fuh Sistah Roxy."

And Aunt Judy did so with alacrity.

"Fole up de patchwuck quilt," continued Mrs. Jackson, addressing

her husband, "an' tote in de cawn-shuck mattress—kain't wais' dis hyah good feathah baid tuh git well in."

"Juliana," he ventured deprecatingly, "honey, is yo' sho'?"

"Git tuh wuck," she interrupted ruthlessly. "Yo' ain' gwine tuh walk home f'om *my* grave on yo' tip-toes wid Roxy Bristow nohow, 'caze dey ain' gwine tuh be any grave. Yo' done thunk de noise o' de cherrybims pickin' dey banjoes fill meh yeahs twell I didn' hyah yo' speechify wid huh. I done see de sheep's-eyes yo' tuck an' cas' at huh ovah meh dyin' baid. Git de cawn-shuck mattress,"—Sister Juliana paused and looked long and earnestly at her lord and master,—“yo' ornery, lazy, triflin', big-mouf niggah!” she finished impersonally, her voice growing faint from physical weakness.

The change was finally effected and Mrs. Jackson reposed uncomfortably upon her knobby corn-husk bed covered with a sheet of unbleached muslin, weary but triumphant.

"Pull down de windah shades," she commanded her husband, recalling that gentleman as he was about to steal quietly from the room, "an' set down on dat stool tuh keep de flies offen me. I wants tuh take a nap. Git a fan now an' go tuh wuck."

Throughout the remainder of the long summer day Brother Jackson sat alone beside the wife so unexpectedly returned to him from the brink of the grave, and waved his feather fan, even as Mrs. Bristow had wafted it a few hours previous. Did he falter in his duty, overcome by the drowsiness inseparable from the quiet of the room and the monotony of his occupation, a querulous voice recalled him from oblivion with the indisputable assertion:

"I ain' daid yit, Jeremiah Jackson. I's come back, I has. Keep on fannin', I's still hyah."



MY PLAN

BY DANIEL KELLEY

QUIET and peace from steady will
To do the things that I must do,
And joy in trying to fulfil
My every duty through and through.

This is my plan, and I shall seek
To make its value doubly sure,
By acting where I used to speak,
And striving where I did endure.